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# DAISY BURNS.

# DAISY BURNS;

## A Tale.

BY

JULIA KAVANAGH,

AUTHOR OF 'NATHALIE,' 'MADELEINE,' 'WOMAN IN FRANCE,' 'WOMEN OF CHRISTIANITY,' ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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# DAISY BURNS.

## CHAPTER I.

As I sat alone this evening beneath the porch, the autumn wind rose and passed amongst the garden trees, then died away in the distance with a low murmuring. A strange thrill ran through me; the present with its aspects vanished; I saw no more the narrow though dearly loved limits which bound my home; the little garden, so calm and grey in the dewy twilight, was a wide and heaving sea; the low rustling of the leaves seemed the sound of the receding tide; the dim horizon became a circular line of light dividing wastes of waters from the solemn depths of vast skies, and I, no longer a woman sitting in my home within

reach of a great city, but an idle, dreaming child, lay in the grassy nook at the end of our garden, whence I watched the ships on their distant path, or sent a wandering glance along the winding beach of sand and rock below.

A moment effaced years, and my childhood, with its home, its joys, and its sorrows, passed before me like a thing of yesterday.

Rock Cottage, as my father had called it, rose on a lonely cliff that looked forth to the sea. It was but a plain abode, with whitewashed walls, green shutters, and low roof, standing in the centre of a wild and neglected garden, overlooked by no other dwelling, and apparently far removed from every habitation. In front, a road, coming down from the low hills of Ryde, wound away to Leigh; behind, at the foot of a cliff, stretched the sea. The people of Leigh wondered "how Doctor Burns could live in a place so bleak and so lonely," and they knew not that to him its charm lay in that very solitude with its boundless horizon; in the murmurs of the wind that ever swept around his dwelling; in the aspect of that sublime sea which daily spread beneath his view, serene or terrible, but ever beautiful.

This was not however the sole recommendation of Rock Cottage; it stood conveniently between

the two villages of Ryde and Leigh, of which my father was the only physician. There was indeed a surgeon at Ryde, but he never passed the threshold of the aristocratic mansions to which Doctor Burns was frequently summoned, and whence he derived the larger portion of his income. That income, never very considerable, proved however sufficient to the few wants of the lonely home where my father, a widower, lived with me, his only child.

Of my mother I had no remembrance; my father seldom mentioned her name; but there was a small minature of her over our parlour mantlepiece, and often in the evening, sitting by our quiet fireside, he would look long and earnestly on the mild and somewhat mournful face before him, then give me a silent caress, as I sat on my stool at his knee, watching him with the ever-attentive look of childhood.

I was sickly and delicate, and he indulged me to excess. "Study," he said, "would only injure me, for I was a great deal too clever and precocious for a child;" so he taught me himself the little I knew, and put off from month to month his long contemplated and still cherished project of sending me to some first-rate school. I believe that in his heart he felt loath to part from me, and was secretly glad to find some excuse that should keep

me at home. He never left me in the morning without a caress, and often, when he returned late from visiting some distant patient, his first impulse, as well as his first act, was to enter my room and kiss me softly as I slept. I loved him passionately and exclusively, and years have not effaced either his memory or his aspect from my heart. I remember him still, a man of thirty-five or so, tall, pale, and gentlemanly, with wavy hair of a deep golden brown, and dark grey eyes of singular light and beauty. How he seemed to others I know not: to me he was all that was good and great.

I felt happy to live thus alone with him; I never wished for the companionship of other children; I asked not to move beyond the limits of our home. Silence, repose, and solitude, things so antipathetic to childhood, were the chief pleasures of mine; partly on account of my bad health, and partly, too, because I had inherited from my father a jealous sort of exclusiveness and reserve, by no means held to be the general characteristic of his countrymen.

My happiest moments were those spent in that grassy nook at the end of our garden, to which I have already alluded. A group of dark pine-trees, growing on the very edge of the cliff, sheltered it from the strength of the breeze; close by began

a steep path, winding away to the shore, and to which a wooden gate, never locked, gave access. But more blest than ever was Eve in her garden,—for in mine grew no forbidden fruit,—I could spend there an entire day, and forget that only this easy barrier stood between me and liberty. My father, seeing how much I liked this spot, had caused a low wooden bench to be placed for me beneath the pine-trees. In the fine weather my delight was to lie there, and to read and dream away whole hours, or to gaze on the clear prospect of the beach below, and, beyond it, on that solemn vastness of sea and sky which, in its sublimity and infinitude, so far surpasses the sights of earth.

It was thus, I remember, that I spent one mild and hazy autumn afternoon, reading, for the twentieth time, the touching story of Pracovia Loupouloff—not the Elizabeth of Madame Cottin, but the real and far more pathetic heroine,—and for the twentieth time, too, thinking with a sort of jealousy and regret, that I was sure I could do quite as much for my father if he were only an exile, when he came and sat down by me. He was going out, and, as usual, would not leave home without giving me a kiss. As he took me on his knee, he saw the book lying open on the bench; he looked at me wistfully, and said with a sigh—

"I wish you would not read so much, my darling. You are always at the books. I have just found my History of Medicine open: what could you want with that?"

"I was reading about the circulation of the blood."

"Well, who discovered it?"

"William Harvey—I wish he had not."

"Why so?" asked my father, looking surprised.

"Because *you* would," I replied, passing my arms around his neck, and laying my cheek close to his.

He smiled, kissed my forehead, rose to go, took a few steps, came back, and, stooping over me as I lay on the bench, he pressed his lips to mine with lingering tenderness, then left me. I saw him enter the house, I heard him depart, and I even caught a glimpse of him and his grey mare as he rode up the steep path leading to Ryde. I looked and listened long after he had vanished and the tramp of the horse had ceased. Then turning once more towards the sea, I idly watched a fisherman's boat slowly fading away in the grey horizon, and thought all the time what a great man my father might have been, if William Harvey had not unfortunately discovered the circulation of the blood two hundred years before. I lay there,

dreaming the whole noon away, until Sarah came down the garden path in quest of me, and, in her mournful voice, observed—

"Miss Margaret, *will* you come in to tea?"

"No," I said coolly, "I won't yet."

Sarah turned up her eyes. I certainly was a spoiled child, and I dare-say not over-civil; but I did not make quite a martyr of her, as she chose to imagine and liked to say.

"God forgive you and change your heart!" she said piously.

I did not answer. Most children are aristocratic, and I had a certain intuitive scorn of servants; besides, Sarah had only been a few days with us.

"Will you come in to tea?" she again asked. I took up my book, as if she had not spoken. "Miss," she said solemnly, "there 'll be a judgement on you yet."

With this warning she left me. I went in when it pleased me to do so. On entering the parlour, I perceived two cups on the tea-tray. "Is Papa come back?" I asked, without looking at Sarah.

"Miss," she said indignantly, "servants aint dogs, nor cats either. I am ashamed of you, Miss."

"Is Papa come back?" I asked again, with all the insolence of conscious security.

If Sarah had dared, I should then have got a

sound slap or box on the ear, but I knew well enough she would not dare: her predecessor had been dismissed for presuming to threaten me with personal chastisement, so she swallowed down her resentment to reply, rather sharply, "No, Miss, the Doctor is not come back, Miss."

I looked at the two teacups, and said haughtily, "I 'll have my tea alone."

Sarah became as crimson as the ribbons in her cap, gave me a spiteful look, laughed shortly, and vindictively replied, "No, Miss, you 'll not have tea alone, Miss. Mr. O'Reilly is come, and as he is not an unfort'nate servant, perhaps you won't mind taking tea with him, Miss."

I sulked on hearing the news.

Cornelius O'Reilly was the friend and countryman of my father, who had known him from his boyhood, and helped to rear and educate him. He came down every autumn to spend ten days or a fortnight at Rock Cottage. He never failed to bring me a present; but this did not render his visits more welcome to me. Whilst he was in the house, I was less petted, less indulged, and, above all, less noticed by my father. It was this I could not forgive the young man.

On noticing the unamiable look with which I heard the news of his arrival, Sarah indignantly

exclaimed, "You ought to blush, Miss, you ought, for being so jealous of your poor Pa! Do you think he is to look at nobody but you? Suppose he were to marry again?"

"He won't, you know he won't," I interrupted, almost passionately; "and you know he said you were not to say it."

This was true; for Sarah, once feeling more than usually "aggravated" with me, had chosen to inform me "that if my Pa went every day to see Miss Murray, it was not at all because she was poorly, but because he was going to marry that lady; and that I and her nephew William were to be got rid of by being sent to school as soon as the wedding was over."

She spoke positively. I believed her, and took the matter so much to heart that my father perceived it, learned the cause, and, after relieving me with the assurance that he was quite determined never to marry a second time, and that I was to be his only pet and darling, called in Sarah, and in my presence administered to her a short and severe reprimand, which she resentfully remembered as one of my many offences. Being now beaten on this point, she sharply observed, "Well, Miss, is it a reason, because our Pa won't marry again, that we are to be rude to our Pa's friend?"

I did not answer.

"I am sure he is kind," she continued, "it's in his face."

No reply.

"I never saw a better-tempered looking gentleman."

I was obstinately silent.

"Nor a handsomer one," persisted Sarah, on whom the young Irishman's appearance seemed to have produced a strong impression; "there is not one like him from Ryde to Leigh."

She spoke pointedly. I felt myself redden.

"He is not half so handsome as Papa," I replied indignantly.

"Right, Margaret," observed a good-humoured voice behind us; and Cornelius O'Reilly, who had overheard the latter part of our discourse, entered the parlour as he spoke.

Sarah uttered a little scream, then hung down her head in maidenly distress. To recover from her confusion, and perhaps to linger in the room, she began to shift and rattle the tea-things, whilst Cornelius, sitting down by the table, signed me to approach. I did do so,—not very graciously, I am afraid. He took both my hands in one of his, and resting the other on my head, looked down at me with a smile. I had often seen him before, yet

when I look back into the past, I find that from this autumn noon, as I stood before him with my hands in his, dates my first clear and distinct recollection of Cornelius O'Reilly.

He was then about twenty, tall, decided in manner and bearing, and strikingly handsome, with heavy masses of dark wavy hair, which he often shook back by a hasty and impatient motion. His face was characteristic, frank, and proud, with a broad brow, ardent hazel eyes, full and brilliant as those of the hawk, and arched features, which, though neither Greek nor Roman, impressed themselves on memory as vivid as any ancient type. His look was both kind and keen; his smile pleasant and perplexing. Every one liked it, but few understood it rightly: it was so ready for raillery, so indulgent, and withal so provokingly careless. Like the face, it expressed a mobile temper, ingenuous in its very changes; a mind that yielded to every impression, and was mastered by none.

Such was then Cornelius O'Reilly; not that he seemed so to me, but the gaze of childhood is as observant as it is unreflecting, and I unconsciously noted signs of which I knew not how to read the meaning.

"Well, Margaret, how are you?" asked Cornelius, after a sufficiently long silence.

"Very well, thank you," I replied in a low tone, and making a useless effort to disengage my hands from his grasp. Without seeming to notice this, he continued, nodding at a brown-paper parcel on the table—

"There is a cake, which my sister Kate sends you, with her very kind love."

I saw Sarah turning up her eyes in admiration, and this induced me to make a reply which I am ashamed to record, it was so ungracious:

"I never eat cake," I said.

"Miss!" began Sarah.

"And I have brought you this," interrupted the young man, drawing forth a book from his pocket. He held it before my eyes; it had a bright cover, with a gilt title; the temptation was strong, but not stronger than my stubborn pride.

"Papa gives me books," I replied.

"Oh! very well," smilingly answered Cornelius; "I shall give him this to give to you."

His good-humoured forbearance began to make me feel penitent, when again Sarah interfered with an unlucky "For shame, Miss!"

"She is only shy," kindly said Cornelius.

"Oh! Sir, it is sly we are," replied Sarah with a prim smile; "if we durst, we'd scamper away through that open door; ay, that we would!" she

added, emphatically nodding her head at me. "We are very unkind, Sir."

"Not at all," observed Cornelius, taking my part; "Margaret is very fond of me, only she does not like to say so. Are you not, my dear?" he added with provoking confidence.

"No," was my reply, more frank than civil.

"Indeed you are, and the proof of it is that of your own accord you are going to give me a kiss."

I was astounded at the audacious idea. I never kissed any one but my father. Alas! I fear I thought myself and my childish caresses very precious things indeed. Cornelius laughed, and stooped; but as he gently released my hands at the same time, I eluded the caress, and darted through the open door up the dark staircase. Sarah wanted to rush after me. Cornelius interfered, and again said I was shy.

"Shy, Sir! shy!" echoed Sarah with a short, indignant laugh, "bless you, Sir, it is pride: she is as proud as Lucifer, and as obstinate too. I could beat that child to death, Sir, and not make her kiss me. No one knows how she has tried my feelings. I am naturally fond of children, and I have been in families where young ladies used to doat on me, and scarcely care for their Mas, much less for their Pas; but with Miss Margaret it is just the reverse.

You may wait on her, scold, praise, coax; it is all one: she cares for no one but for her Pa—of whom she is as jealous as can be, Sir; and if she does n't like you, Sir, why she won't like you, and there 's an end of it."

He laughed, as she paused, out of breath at the volubility with which she had spoken. I waited not to hear more, but softly stole up to my room. I feared neither darkness nor solitude; besides, the moon had risen, and her pale, mild light fell on the floor. So I sat down by my bed, laid my head on the pillow, and, as I thus faced the window, I looked at the open sky beyond it, and watched a whole flock of soft white clouds slowly journeying towards the west. I thought to remain thus until I should hear the well-known tramp of my father's horse coming down the stony road, but unconsciously my eyes closed and I fell fast asleep.

How long I slept I cannot tell. I know that I had a fearful dream, which I have never been able to remember, and that I woke with the cold dews on my brow and an awful dread at my heart. I looked up trembling with terror; a large dark cloud was passing over the moon; in my room there was the gloom of midnight, but not its silence. Unusual tumult filled our quiet home; I listened and heard the voices of strange men, and above them that of

Sarah, rising loud in lamentation, and exclaiming, "Oh! my poor master!"

My next remembrance is, that standing on the steps of the staircase, I looked down at something passing below; that a sharp current of fresh air came from the open front-door, beyond which I caught sight of a starry sky; that on the threshold of the parlour stood, with their backs to me, three men in coarse jackets; and that, looking beyond them in the room, I saw Sarah weeping bitterly, and holding a flickering light, whilst Cornelius O'Reilly bent over my father, who sat in his chair motionless and deadly pale. He said something; Cornelius looked at Sarah; she laid down the light, came out, shut the door, and all vanished like a vision lost in sudden obscurity. And a vision I might have thought it, but for the subdued speech that followed. Sarah was sobbing in the dark passage.

"Come, girl, don't take on so," said a man's voice, speaking low, "where's the use? Any one can see it is all over with the poor doctor."

"Oh! don't," incoherently exclaimed Sarah, "don't."

"He said so himself, and he ought to know. 'It is all over with me, Dick,' says he, when we picked him up from where that cursed horse had thrown him; 'take me home to die,' says he, 'take me home to die.'"

Sarah moaned; the two other men said nothing; had they but uttered a word, I should have remembered it, for I still seem to hear distinct, as if but just fallen from the lips of the speaker, not merely the words, but the very intonations of that voice to which, standing on the dark staircase, I then listened in all the stupor of grief. Scarcely had it ceased, when the parlour door opened; Cornelius, looking very sad and pale, appeared on the threshold, and, raising his voice, called out, "Margaret!"

I sprang down at once; in a second I was by my father, with my arms round his neck, my cheek to his. He bore no sign of external injury; but his brow was ashy pale; his look was dim; his lips were white. He recognized me, for he looked from me to Cornelius, with a glance that lit suddenly. The young man laid his hand on my shoulder; tears ran down his face, and his lips trembled as he said, "May God forsake me when I forsake your child!"

My father made an effort; he raised himself on one elbow.

"Tell Kate—" he began; but the words that should have followed died away in a mere incoherent murmur: he sank back; there was a sound of heavy breathing; then followed a deep stillness. I felt the hand of Cornelius leaning more heavily on my shoulder. "Sarah!" he said, looking towards the door, and speaking in a whisper.

She came forward, took my hand, and led me away. She wept bitterly; I looked at her, and shed not one tear. I know not what I felt then; it was dread, it was agony, stupor, and grief.

Alas! I learned in that hour how bitter a chalice even a poor little child may be called upon to drink; how early all may learn to feel the weight of that hand which, heavy as it seems, chastens not in its wrath, but in its tenderness.

## CHAPTER II.

My father was dead. He who had kissed me a few hours before,—whose return—God help me, unhappy child!—I had expected, but whose caresses had ceased for ever, for whose coming I might listen in vain,—my father, who loved me so very dearly, was dead.

Of what had befallen me, of the change in my destinies, this was all I clearly understood, and this, alas! I understood but too well. When Cornelius came to me, as I sat alone in the back parlour, where Sarah had taken and left me, when he said, "Margaret, you must go with Sarah!" I neither refused nor resisted. I asked not even why or where I was going. I had been a proud and obstinate child, I was now humble and submissive. I

felt, in a manner I cannot define, it was so acute and deep, that my power was over. He who knew not how to deny aught to my entreaties or tears was lying in the next room, cold and inanimate: nor voice, nor embrace of his child would move him now.

Sarah took me to the imaginary step-mother with whom she had once terrified me. Miss Murray was a pale, fair-haired, invalid lady of thirty, who resided in a neat hive-looking little place, called Honeysuckle Cottage; there she dwelt like a solitary bee, sitting in her chair and working the whole day long, with slow industry, or conning over her ailments in a faint, murmuring voice, that reminded one of the hum of a distant hive. She disliked sound, motion, and light; and kept her floors soft, and her windows shrouded and dim. Pets were her horror,—they made a noise and moved about; flowers she tolerated,—they were quiet and silent. She neither went out nor received visits, but lived in a hushed, dreamy, twilight way, suited to her health, mind, and temper. We found Miss Murray already apprised of my father's death. She sat in her parlour, with a soft cambric handkerchief to her eyes; near her stood her servant Abby, suggesting consolation. A lamp with a dark green shade, burned dimly on the table.

"I cannot survive it, Abby, I cannot," faintly sighed Miss Murray; "a friend—"

"The best friends must part, Ma'am."

"A friend, Abby, who understood my constitution so well. Abby, who is that?"

"Please, Ma'am," said Sarah, leading me in, "Mr. O'Reilly will take it so kind if you—"

"You need not mention it, Sarah, I understand; the subject is a painful one. You may leave the dear child to me. I am sure she will forbear to distress me, in my weak state, by unavailing regrets. No one can have more cause than I have, to regret the invaluable friend to whom I owe years of existence."

"She does n't cry!" said Abby, looking at me.

"She never cries," emphatically observed Sarah; "that child is dreadful proud, Ma'am."

"She is quite right," gravely remarked Miss Murray; "tears are most injurious to the system. Come here, my dear, and sit by me."

She pointed to a low stool near her chair. I did not move. Sarah had to lead me to it; as I sat down apathetically, she made a mysterious sign to the lady.

"Not insane, surely!" exclaimed Miss Murray, wheeling off her chair with sudden alarm and velocity.

"Oh dear no, Ma'am! rather idiotic; always thought so from her dreadful stubbornness."

"Sad," sighed Miss Murray, "but quiet at least. Good evening, Sarah. Abby, pray keep a look-out for that dreadful boy: my nerves are unusually weak."

The two servants left on tiptoe, and softly closed the door. I remained alone with Miss Murray.

"My dear," she began, "I hope you are not going to fret; it would be so unchristian. I have lost a kind father, an invaluable mother, an affectionate aunt, the dearest of brothers—" The list was interrupted by the door which opened very gently, to admit a lad of eleven or twelve, tall, strong, fair-headed, rather handsome, but looking as rough and rude as a young bear. This was her nephew William. His father had died some six months before bequeathing him to the gurdianship of his aunt, who immediately committed him to school for bad behaviour, and to whom his periodical visits, during the holidays, were a source of acute distress. On seeing him enter, Miss Murray turned up her eyes like one prepared for anything, and faintly observed, "William, have you seen Abby?"

"Yes," was his sulky reply.

"Then let me beseech you," she pathetically

rejoined, "to respect my feelings and those of this dear child."

He looked at me, but never answered. She continued, "Don't behave like a young savage,—if you can help it," she kindly added.

William scowled at his aunt, and thrust his hands into his pockets by way of reply.

"You have passed through the same trial," pursued Miss Murray, "and, though I cannot say that your language has always been sufficiently respectful towards the memory of my lamented brother—"

"Why did he leave me to petticoat government?" angrily interrupted William; "you don't think I am going to be trodden down by a lot of women. I come in singing, not knowing anything, and Abby calls me a laughing hyena; and I am scarcely in the room before you set me down as a savage! I won't—there!"

This must have meant something, for Miss Murray bewailed her unhappy fate, whilst William doggedly sat down by the table, across which he darted surly glances at me.

"I do not mean to reproach the memory of my dearest brother," feelingly began Miss Murray, "but really if he had had any consideration for me, and my weak state, he ought to have taken more

care of himself, and tried to live longer. William, what do you mean by those atrocious grimaces?"

"I wish she would n't," said William, whose features worked in a very extraordinary manner; "I wish she would n't."

Miss Murray followed the direction of his glance, and looked round to where I sat a little behind her.

"I declare the unfortunate child is crying," she exclaimed, in a tone of distress,—"sobbing too! William, ring the bell,—call Abby. My dear, how can you? Oh! Abby, Abby," she added, as the door opened, and Abby entered, "look—is there no way of stopping that?"

"Does n't she cry though?" observed Abby, astonished.

I had bowed my head on my knees, and I wept and sobbed passionately. Miss Murray, after vainly asking for the means "of stopping that," declared I should go to bed. I made no resistance; Abby took my hand to lead me away; when William, exclaiming, "It's a burning shame, that's what it is," flew at her and attempted a rescue. A scuffle followed, short but decisive. William was ignominiously conquered; he retreated behind the table, his hair in great disorder, his face crimson with shame.

"Oh! the young tiger!" cried Abby, still out of

breath with her victory; "that boy will end badly, Ma'am!"

William gave her a look of scorn. Miss Murray, who had wheeled back her chair, from the commencement of the conflict, observed, with feeling reproach, "William, you shall go back to school to-morrow. Abby, put that child to bed; allow me to suggest the passage for your next battle."

Abby slammed the door indignantly, and muttering she would not fight in a passage for any one, she took me to her room, undressed me, and put me to bed. My weeping had not ceased.

"Come, Miss," she said, a little roughly, "crying is no use, you know."

She stooped to give me a kiss; I turned away with passionate sorrow. What was to me the caress of a stranger on the night that had deprived me for ever of my father's embrace?

"Proud little hussy!" she exclaimed, half angrily.

With this she left me. Ere long she returned, and lay down by my side; she was soon breathing hard and loud. I silently cried myself to sleep.

I awoke the next morning, subdued by grief into a mute apathy that delighted Miss Murray when I went down to breakfast, and made her hold me up as a model to her nephew.

He replied with great disgust, "He was not going to make a girl of himself, to please her and Abby."

"But you could respect the child's feelings by remaining silent," remonstrated his aunt, gently sipping her tea.

"Why don't you eat?" asked William, addressing me.

"I am not hungry."

"All children are not voracious, like you, William," said Miss Murray.

"Have you got an aunt?" he inquired, ignoring her remark.

"No!" I answered laconically, for his questions wearied me.

"Lucky!" he replied, with a look and sigh of envy.

"Dreadful!" murmured Miss Murray, putting down her cup,—"not twelve yet; dreadful!"

"Who is to take care of you?" continued William.

Miss Murray was one of the many good-natured persons who dislike uncomfortable facts and questions. She nervously exclaimed, "Do not mind him, my dear!"

"Don't you like them?" pursued William.

I gave him no reply.

"Quite right," approvingly observed Miss Murray; "take example on that child, William."

"She is a sulky little monkey!" he indignantly exclaimed, and, until his departure, which took place in the course of the day, he spoke no more to me.

A week passed; the only incident it produced was that I was clad in mourning from head to foot. I continued to charm Miss Murray by a listless apathy, which increased every day. I either sat in the parlour looking at her sewing, or in a little back garden, on a low wooden bench near the door. Once there, I moved no more until called in by Abby. Thus she and Sarah found me late one afternoon, at the close of the week. I took no notice of their approach. They looked at me, and sagaciously nodded their heads at one another. A mysterious dialogue followed.

"Eh?" inquiringly said Sarah.

"Yes!" emphatically replied Abby.

"Never!" exclaimed Sarah.

"Oh dear, no!" was the decisive answer.

Sarah sighed, sat down by me, asked me how I was; if I knew her; and other questions of the sort. I neither looked at her nor replied. She rose, held herself up as a warning to Abby "not to place her affections on Master William;" to

which Abby indignantly replied "there was no fear;" then solemnly forgave me my ingratitude.

As they re-entered the house, I thought I heard the voice of Cornelius O'Reilly in the passage. My apathy vanished as if by magic. I was roused and rebellious. Cornelius O'Reilly had not come near me since my father's death: at once I guessed his errand was to take me away with him. I looked around me: a back door afforded means of escape; I opened it, slipped out unperceived, then glided along a lonely lane. In a few minutes I had reached Rock Cottage, unseen and unmissed.

The home is an instinct of the heart, and as the wounded bird flies to its nest, I fled for refuge to the dwelling which had sheltered me so long.

The garden-gate stood open, but the front door and windows were shut. I went round to the back of the house; my heart sank to find that there too all was closed and silent. I sat down on the last of the stone steps, vaguely hoping that some one would open and let me in. I listened for the coming of a foot, for the tones of a voice; but sounds of life there were none. Above me bent a lowering sky, sullen and dark; the wind had risen; the pine-trees at the end of the garden bent before the blast, then rose again, seeming to send forth a low and wild lament; the tide was coming

in, and the broken dash of the waves against the base of the cliff was followed by their receding murmur, full and deep.

An utterable sense of woe, of my desolate condition, of all that had been mine and never could be mine again, came over me; my heart, bursting with a grief that had remained too silent, could bear no more. I gave one dreary look around me, then clasping my arms above my head, and lying across the stone steps, I wept passionately on the threshold of my lost home. At length a kind voise roused me.

"Margaret, what are you doing here?" asked Cornelius.

I neither moved nor replied. He sat down by me and raised me gently. I gazed at him vacantly. His handsome face saddened.

"Poor little thing!" he said, "poor little thing!" He took my cold hands in his, and drew me closer to him. Subdued by grief, I yielded. I had refused his presents, shunned his caresses, been jealous, proud, and insolent, hated the very thought of his presence in my father's house, and now he came to seek me on the threshold of that house, to take me—a miserable outcast child—in his embrace.

The thrill of a strange and rapid emotion ran

through me. I disengaged my hands from those of Cornelius, and, with a sudden impulse, threw my arms around his neck. My cheek lay near his; his lips touched mine; I mutely returned the caress. I was conquered.

I was a child, how could I but feel with a child's feelings, entirely? I kept back nothing; I knew not how or why, but I gave him my whole heart from that hour.

## CHAPTER III.

Cornelius O'Reilly had too much tact not to perceive at once the ascendency he had obtained over the proud and shy child, who, after rejecting his kindness for years, had yielded herself up in a moment. He looked down at me with a thoughtful, amused smile, which I understood, but which did not make me even change my attitude. I felt so happy thus, from the very sense of a submission which implied on my part dependence—that blessed trust of the child; on his, protection—that truest pleasure of strength; on both, affection, without which dependence becomes slavish and protection a burden.

The temper of Cornelius was open and direct; he claimed his authority at once, and found me more docile than I had ever been rebellious: it

was no more in my nature to yield half obedience than to give divided love.

"We must go, Margaret," he said, in a tone which, though kind, did not admit of objection.

I rose and took his hand without a murmur.

We returned to Honeysuckle Cottage, where we found Miss Murray calmly wondering to Abby "what could have become of the dear child."

Cornelius inquired at what hour the stage-coach passed through Ryde.

"Half-past nine, Sir," replied Abby.

"Margaret, get ready," said Cornelius, looking at his watch, a present of my father's.

I went upstairs with Abby, who dressed and brought me down again in stately silence.

"It shall be attended to, Mr. O'Reilly," gravely observed Miss Murray to Cornelius, as we entered the parlour.

He heard me, and, without turning round, said quietly, "Margaret, go and bid Miss Murray good-bye, and thank her for all her kindness."

"Will you not also give me a kiss?" gently asked Miss Murray, as, going up to her, I did as I was bid, and no more.

I looked at Cornelius; the meaning of his glance was plain. I kissed Miss Murray. She drew out her handkerchief, wished for a niece instead of a

nephew, then shook hands with Cornelius, and, sinking back after a faint effort to rise, she rang the bell.

Abby let us out. Cornelius quietly slipped something in her hand, then looked at me expressively.

"Good-bye, Abby," I said; and I kissed her as I had kissed her mistress.

"Well, to be sure!" she exclaimed; but Cornelius only smiled, took my hand, and led me away.

For a while we followed the road that led to Ryde, and passed by Rock Cottage; but suddenly leaving to our right my old home and the sea, we turned down a lonely lane on our left. Dusk had set in, and our way lay through solitary fields, fenced in by hedges and dark spectral trees, behind which shone the full moon, looking large and red in the thick haze of evening mists. We met no one; and of cottage, farm, or homestead, howsoever lonely, token there seemed none. A sombre indefinite line, like the summit of some ancient forest, rose against the dark sky, and bounded the horizon before us. I looked in vain for the hills of Ryde. I turned to Cornelius to question him; but he seemed so abstracted that I did not dare to speak. We walked on silently.

A quarter of an hour brought us to the end of

the lane, which terminated in a high brick wall, overshadowed by tall trees for a considerable distance. Through a massive iron gate, guarded by a dilapidated-looking lodge, we caught a glimpse of a long avenue, at the end of which burned a solitary light. Cornelius rang a bell; a surly-looking porter came out of the lodge, opened the gate, locked it when we were within, pointed to the right, then re-entered the lodge,—the whole without uttering a word.

The avenue which we now followed, extended through a dreary-looking park, and ended with two old iron lamp-posts, one extinguished, broken, and lying on the ground half hidden by rank weeds, the other still standing and bearing its lantern of tarnished glass, in which the flame burned dimly. The two had once formed an entrance to a square court, with a ruined stone fountain in the centre, and beyond it an old brick Elizabethan mansion, on which the pale moonlight now fell. Heavy, brown with age, dark with ivy, it rested with a wearied air on a low and massive arcade. It faced the avenue, and was sheltered behind by a grove of yews and cypresses that rose solemn and motionless, giving it an aspect both sombre and funereal. No light came from the closed windows; the whole place looked as dark and silent as any ruin. We

crossed the court, and Cornelius knocked at the front door, which projected slightly from both house and arcade.

"Do you live here?" I asked.

"No, child; surely you know I live in London with my sister Kate!"

As he spoke, a small slipshod servant-girl unbarred and partly opened the door. She held a tallow-candle in one hand; the other kept the door ajar. Through the opening she showed us the half of a round and astonished face.

"Mr. Thornton—" began Cornelius.

"He won't see you," she interrupted, and attempted to shut the door, but this Cornelius prevented by interposing his hand.

"I am come on business," he said.

"Where's the letter?" asked the little servant, stretching out her hand to receive it.

"Letter! I have no letter, but here is my card."

She shook her head, would not take the card, and, in a tone of deep conviction, declared, "it was not a bit of use."

"I tell you I am come on business!" impatiently observed Cornelius.

"Well, then, where's the letter?"

There was so evident a connection in her mind

between business and a letter, that, annoyed as he was, Cornelius could not help laughing.

"I wish I had a letter, since your heart is set upon one," he replied, good-humouredly; "however, I came not to deliver a letter, but to speak to Mr. Thornton on very important business."

"Can't you give the letter, then?" she urged, in a tone of indignant remonstrance at his obstinacy.

Cornelius searched in his pockets; no letter came forth. "On my word," he gravely observed, "I have not got one; no, not even an old envelope."

"You shan't come in then!" she said, looking at him from behind the door, as sharp and as snappish as a young pup learning to keep watch.

"I beg your pardon, I will go in," replied Cornelius with cool civility.

"If you don't take that there hand of yours away," cried the girl with startling shrillness, "I shall get the light at it."

"Indeed! I am not going to have my poor fingers singed!" said Cornelius, very decisively; so saying, he stooped and suddenly blew out the light.

She screamed, dropped the candlestick, and let go the door: we entered; the girl ran away along

the passage lit with a faint glimmering light proceeding from the staircase above.

"Do you take me for a housebreaker?" asked Cornelius; "I tell you I want to speak to Mr. Thornton on business."

She stopped short, looked at him with sullen suspicion, and doggedly replied, "Master won't see you; he won't see none but the gentleman from London."

"I am from London," quietly said Cornelius.

She stared for awhile like one bewildered, then opened a side-door whence issued a stream of ruddy light, and muttering something in which the word "London" was alone distinguishable, she showed us in and closed the door upon us.

We found ourselves in a large room, scant of chairs and tables, but so amply stocked with books, globes, maps, stuffed animals, cases of insects, geological specimens, and odd-looking machines and instruments, that we could scarcely find room to stand. A bright fire blazed on the wide hearth, yet the whole place had a mouldy air and odour, and looked like a magician's chamber. A lamp suspended from the ceiling, and burning rather dimly, gave a spectral effect. Its circle of light was shed over a square table covered with papers, and by which sat a singular-looking man—one of

the numberless magicians of modern times, clad, it is true, in every-day attire, but whose characteristic features, swarthy complexion, and white hair and beard, needed not the flowing robe or mystic belt to seem impressive. He was too intent on examining some important beetle through a magnifying glass, to notice our insignificant approach, more than by a certain waving motion of the hand, implying the absolute necessity of silence on our part, and on his the utter impossibility of attending to us. At length he looked up, and fastening a pair of piercing black eyes on Cornelius, he addressed him with the abrupt observation: "Sir, I am intensely busy, but you are welcome; pray be seated."

Cornelius looked round: there was but one chair free, he gave it to me, remained standing himself, and, turning to Mr. Thornton, observed, "I am come, Sir, on the matter I mentioned in my letter of Wednesday last, and which you have not, I dare say, had leisure to answer."

Mr. Thornton did not reply; he sat back in his chair looking at Cornelius from head to foot.

"Sir!" he said, in a tone of incredulous surprise, "you are young—very. I don't know you."

Cornelius reddened, and stiffly handed his card, which Mr. Thornton negligently dropped.

"I cannot say I have ever heard of Cornelius

O'Reilly," he remarked; "but I have been years away. You may be famous for all I know; but, I repeat it, you are very young, Sir."

He spoke with an air of strong and settled conviction.

"I claim no celebrity," drily replied Cornelius, "and my age has nothing to do with my errand. I am come to—" here he stopped short, on perceiving that Mr. Thornton, after casting several longing looks at his beetle, had gradually, like a needle attracted by a potent magnet, been raising the magnifying glass to the level of his right eye, which it no sooner reached, than he made a sudden dart down at the table; but, when the voice of Cornelius ceased, he started, looked up, and said, with a sigh of regret, "You came to have some difficult point settled? Well, Sir, though I have only been three days in England, I do not complain; but you see this fascinating specimen; I beseech you to be brief." He laid down the magnifying glass, and wheeled away his chair from the reach of temptation.

"I am come to give, not to seek, information," quietly answered Cornelius.

"You bring me a specimen," interrupted Mr. Thornton, his small black eyes kindling. "A Melolo—!"

"A specimen of humanity," interrupted Cornelius,—"a child."

"A child!" echoed Mr. Thornton, whose look for the first time fell on me; "and a little girl, too!" he added, throwing himself back in his chair with mingled disgust and wonder.

"She is ten,—an orphan; and I have brought her to you as to her natural protector," composedly observed Cornelius.

Mr. Thornton looked unconvinced.

"She may be ten,—an orphan; but I don't see why you bring her to me."

"You do not know?"

"No, Sir; I am said to be a learned man, but on this point I confess my ignorance."

Without heeding his impatience, Cornelius calmly replied, "I have brought her to you, Sir, because she is your grand-daughter."

Mr. Thornton gave a jump that nearly upset the table; but promptly recovering, and feeling irritated, perhaps, in proportion to his momentary emotion, he observed, in an irascible tone, "I am amazed at you, Sir! Not satisfied with introducing yourself to me as a scientific man from London,—a fact directly contradicted by your juvenile appearance,—you want to palm off your little girls upon me! My grand-daughter!—Sir, I have no grand-daughter."

The look of Cornelius kindled; but he controlled his temper, to say, quietly, "If you had taken, Sir, the trouble to read a letter which I regret to see lying on your table with the seal unbroken, you would have learned that this is the child of Mr. Thornton's daughter, who has been dead some years, and of Doctor Edward Burns, who died the other day, killed by a fall from his horse."

Mr. Thornton did not answer; he took a letter lying on a pile of books, broke the seal, read it through; then laid it down, and looked thoughtful.

"Well, Sir!" he observed, after a pause; and speaking now in the tone of a man of the world, "I acknowledge my mistake, and beg your pardon. But I never read business letters, for one of which I took yours."

He spoke very civilly, but said not a word concerning the subject of the letter; of which, quite as civilly, Cornelius reminded him.

"The statements made in that letter require some proof," he observed, "and—"

"Your word suffices," interrupted Mr. Thornton, very politely. "I am satisfied."

Cornelius bowed, but persisted.

"I have not the honour of being personally known to you, Sir; I would rather—"

"Sir, one gentleman is quick to recognize an-

other gentleman," again interrupted Mr. Thornton; "I am quite satisfied."

He bowed a little ironically; and again Cornelius bent his head in acknowledgment, observing, with a smile beneath which lurked not ungraceful raillery,—

"I am delighted to think you are satisfied, Sir, as there remains for me but to ask a plain question;—there is nothing like plain, direct dealing between gentlemen. I am on my way to town, and somewhat pressed for time. I have called to know whether George Thornton, of Thornton House, will or will not receive his little granddaughter."

There was no evading a question so distinctly stated. Mr. Thornton looked at me with a darkening brow. "Sir," he morosely replied, "George Thornton had once a daughter of his own, whom he liked after his own way. He took a liking, too, to a young Irish physician, who settled in these parts; and who, I can't help saying it, was a very clever fellow, and had, for his years, a wonderful knowledge of chemistry. 'I'll give Margaret to that man,' thought George Thornton; and, whilst he was thinking about it, the Irish physician quietly stole his daughter one evening. George Thornton made no outcry; he simply said he would

never forgive either one or the other, and he never did."

"Your daughter's child is innocent," pleaded Cornelius.

"She is her father's child,—and his image, too; but no matter! I believe you are on your way to town, Sir?"

"Yes, Sir, I am."

"And you called—?"

"To leave the child: such was my errand."

"Your errand is fulfilled, Sir; you may leave the child; I shall provide for her."

"The late Doctor Burns has left some property—"

"I will have nothing to do with the property of the late Doctor Burns."

Mr. Thornton was anything but gracious, now; but, without heeding this, Cornelius turned to me; he laid his hand on my head:

"Good bye! child," he said in a moved tone, "God bless you!"

He turned away; but I clung to him. "Take me with you!" I exclaimed; "take me with you!"

"I cannot, Margaret," gently replied Cornelius, striving to disengage his hand from mine.

"I won't stay here," I cried indignantly.

"You must," he quietly answered.

I dropped his hand, and burst into tears. He looked pained; but his resolve did not alter.

"It cannot be helped," he said. "Good bye! I shall come and see you."

He held out his hand to me; but I felt forsaken and betrayed, and turned away resentfully. He bent over me.

"Will you not bid me good-bye?" he asked.

I flung my arms around his neck; and, sobbing bitterly, I exclaimed, "Oh! why then won't you take me with you?" He did not answer, gave me a quiet kiss, untwined my arms from around his neck, exchanged a formal adieu with my grandfather, and left me as unconcernedly as if, little more than an hour before, he had not taken me in his arms, and cherished me in that lonely garden, where I, so foolishly mistaking pity for fondness, had given him an affection he evidently did not prize, and which, as I now began to feel, had no home save the grave of the dead.

## CHAPTER IV.

When I heard the door close on Cornelius, my tears ceased; they had not moved him; they were useless; it was all over, my fate was fixed. I sat on a chair, drearily looking across the table, at my brown-faced, white-bearded grandfather, who raised his voice and called out impatiently, "Polly, Molly, Mary, Thing—where are you?" The little servant-girl answered this indiscriminate appeal by showing her full round face at the door. Mr. Thornton, resting both his hands on the table, slightly bent forward to say impressively, "That young man is never to be let in again,—do you understand?" She assented by nodding her head several times in rapid succession, then closed the door.

"But I will see Mr. O'Reilly," I exclaimed

indignantly; for though he had forsaken me, I still looked up to him as to my protector and friend.

Mr. Thornton raised his eyebrows, and gave an ironical grunt. At the same moment the door again opened, and a lady, young, elegantly attired, and beautiful as the princess of a fairy tale, entered the room.

"Uncle," she began, but, on seeing me, she stopped short; then with evident wonder asked briefly, "Who is it?"

"Her name is Burns," was the short reply. The young lady looked at me, and nodded significantly. Mr. Thornton resumed, "I shall provide for her; in the meanwhile tell Mrs. Marks to take care of her, and keep her out of my way, until I have settled how she is to be disposed of." I felt very like a bale of useless goods.

"Then you will have the charity not to keep her here," observed the young lady with impatient bitterness.

"I shall have the charity not to let her become a fine lady like you, Edith," he sarcastically answered.

"Do you mean to make a governess of your grand-daughter, as you would of your niece if you could?"

"My dear, you forget my niece could not be a governess; and neither governess nor fine lady shall be this child, whom you are pleased to call my grand-daughter. A common-place education, some decent occupation,—such is to be her destiny. And now be so good as to leave me."

"To your beetles!" she indignantly replied; "you don't care for anything but your beetles. I am sick of my life. I wish I were dead—I wish I had never seen this dreadful old hole."

"Pity you flirted with the intended of your cousin, my dear, and got packed off. Suppose you try and get married; I intend leaving England again, and it will be rather dull for you to stay here alone with Mrs. Marks."

"I'll run away sooner."

"That's just what I mean. Elope, my dear, elope!"

"I won't eat any more!" she exclaimed, crimson with vexation and shame; "I know you don't believe it, but I won't."

"Then you'll die; I'll embalm you, and you'll make a lovely young mummy." His little black eyes sparkled as if he rather relished the idea; but it was more than the beautiful Edith could stand, for she burst into tears, and, calling her uncle "a barbarous tyrant," was flying out of the room in a

rage, when he coolly summoned her back to say, "Edith, take it with you!"

By "it" he meant me. She took my hand and obeyed; her beautiful blue eyes flashing resentfully, her bosom still heaving with indignant grief. But Mr. Thornton, heedless of her anger and sorrow, had resumed his magnifying glass, and was again intent on the beetle. When we both stood on the threshold of the door, Edith turned round to confront him, and said vindictively, "I wish there may never be another beetle,—there!" With this she slammed the door, dropped my hand, turned to her left, and went up an old oak staircase, dimly lit by an iron lamp riveted to the wall. She once looked back to see that I followed her, but took no other notice of me. As she reached a wide landing, she met, coming down, a tall and thin old lady in black.

"Mrs. Marks," she said briefly, "you are to attend to this child."

Without another word or look she continued her ascent. Mrs. Marks looked down at me from the landing, as I stood on the staircase a few steps below her; then up at the light figure of Edith ascending the next flight, and indignantly muttering "that she had never"—the rest did not reach me—she majestically signed me to approach. I obeyed. She eyed me from head to foot, but did not seem much

enlightened by the survey. "That is the way up," she said at length, pointing with a long fore-finger to the staircase. The explanation seemed to me a very needless one, but I followed her upstairs silently. We went up until I thought we should never stop, though the ceiling becoming lower with every flight we ascended, indicated that we were approaching the highest regions of the house. I felt tired, but Mrs. Marks went on steadily, as if the tower of Babel would not have daunted her. At length she came to a pause. We had reached a low irregular corridor, that seemed to run round the whole house, and was garnished with numerous doors. Before one of these Mrs. Marks made a dead stop. She unlocked it, held it open by main force as far as its rusty hinges would allow, then looking round at me, said emphatically—

"That is the way in."

I hesitated, then slid in; Mrs. Marks slid in after me, then let go the door, which of its own accord closed with a snap, locking us in a small, snug room, with thick curtains, closely drawn, a warm carpet on the floor, a bright fire burning in the grate, a kettle singing on the hob, a cat purring on the hearth rug, a chair of inviting depth awaiting its tenant by the fireside, and near it a small table with tray and tea-things.

"Sit down," said Mrs. Marks, pointing to a chair.

I obeyed. She went to the fireplace, and planting herself on the rug, with her hands gathering her skirts in front, and her back to the fire, she thence surveyed me with an attentive stare. Passed from Miss Murray to Cornelius,—from him to Mr. Thornton,—from Mr. Thornton to his niece,—and from her again to Mrs. Marks, I felt more apathetic than ever; but Mrs. Marks stood exactly opposite me; I could not help seeing her. She was a gaunt, tall woman, with a pale face and fixed eyes, that made her look like her own portrait. They were eclipsed by a pair of bright black pins, which projected from her cap on either side, and held some mysterious connection with her front. She wore a robe of rusty black, that fitted tight to the figure, and was not over-ample in the skirt. After a long contemplation, she uttered a solemn "I shall see," then left the room. The door snapped after her; I remained alone with the cat, which, like every creature in that house, seemed to care nothing for me, but went on purring with half-shut eyes.

Its mistress soon returned, settled herself in her arm-chair, and thence seemed inclined to survey me again; but the contemplation was disturbed by a tap at the door.

"Come in, Mrs. Digby; don't be afraid of the door," encouragingly said Mrs. Marks.

Mrs. Digby was probably nervous, for she made several feeble attempts to introduce her person, — as suddenly darting back again, — before she gathered sufficient courage to accomplish the delicate operation.

"Gracious! I never saw such a door!" she then observed; "I wonder you can keep such a creature, Mrs. Marks."

"It has its good points," philosophically replied Mrs. Marks; "it is safer than a lock, and, like a dog, won't bite unless you are afraid of it. But if you dally with it, Mrs. Digby, why it may give you a snap!"

"Gracious!" exclaimed Mrs. Digby, looking horrified; "how can you live up here, Mrs. Marks?"

"The rooms below are gloomy, and have no prospect; whereas here I sit by the window, look over the whole grounds, and, if I see anything wrong, I just touch this string,—then a bell rings, —and Richard at the lodge is warned."

"Well," dismally observed Mrs. Digby, "I dare-say that is very pleasant; but I have enough of old castles, Mrs. Marks."

"This is not a castle."

"They read like such dear horrid old places,

that I was quite delighted when Miss Grainger said to me the other day,' Digby, we are going to Uncle Thornton's!' I did not know they smelt more mouldy than any cheese, and that there was no sleeping with the rats."

"Yes, the little things will trot about, spite of the cat; but then one must live and let live, Mrs. Digby."

"Don't say one must let rats live, Mrs. Marks, don't! they are almost as bad as Mr. Thornton's horrid things,—only they are stuffed."

"Mr. Thornton is a learned man," sententiously replied Mrs. Marks, "but I do think he gives too much attention to natural history and entomology. Mr. Marks thought nothing of entomology, he was all for chemistry; that's the science, Mrs. Digby!"

"Did n't it blow him up?"

"Blow him up! Was Mr. Marks a gunpowder-mill, Mrs. Digby? He perished in making a scientific experiment; you will, I trust, soon learn the difference. A man of Mr. Thornton's immense mind cannot but sicken of entomology, and return to chemistry. You will not see much, but you will hear reports—"

"Gracious!" interrupted Mrs. Digby, with an alarmed air, "I wish I were out of the place."

"Then help your handsome young lady to get a husband," sneered Mrs. Marks from the depths of her arm-chair.

"If Miss Grainger had my spirit," loftily replied Mrs. Digby, "she would now be a countess of the realm, Mrs. Marks; and if she had been guided by me, she would at least be the wife of the handsomest gentleman I ever saw."

"Edward Thornton! the heir-at-law! Pooh! Mrs. Digby! he has not a penny, and Mr. Thornton won't die just yet."

"He is very handsome," spiritedly returned Mrs. Digby; "but, as I said, if Miss Grainger will put herself in the hands of Mrs. Brand, why she must bear with the consequences, Mrs. Marks."

So saying, Mrs. Digby for the first time turned towards me. She was a thin, fair, faded woman, attired in a light blue dress, which, like its wearer, was rather *passée*. She sat by the table, with the tip of her elbow resting on the edge; drooping in a graceful willow-like attitude, she raised a tortoise-shell eye-glass to her eyes, examined me through it, then dropping it with lady-like grace, sighed forth—

"How do you feel, darling?"

I was proud, more proud than shy; I resented being left to the subordinates of my grandfather's

household, and did not choose to answer. Mrs. Marks spared me the trouble.

"You might as well talk to the cat, Mrs. Digby. Children," she added, giving me an impressive look of her dull eyes, "are, up to a certain age, little animal creatures: they have speech, sensation, but neither thought nor feeling. Mr. Marks and I would never have anything to do with them."

"Oh! Mrs. Marks! a baby?"

"Have you ever had one?"

Mrs. Digby reddened, and asked for an explanation. Mrs. Marks asked to know if there had not been a Mr. Digby? No. But there might have been a Mr. Wilkinson, two Messrs. Jones—Mr. Thompson was coming on, and Mr. John Smith was looming in the distance, when Mrs. Marks interrupted the series by pouring out the tea. I sat between the two ladies, but I ate nothing.

"That child won't live," observed Mrs. Marks at the close of her own hearty meal; "she is a puny thing for her age; besides it is not natural in such an essentially physical creature as a child not to eat; why don't you eat, Anna?"

I looked at her and spoke for the first time: "My name is not Anna."

"What is your name, then?—your Christian name, by which I am to call you?"

I did not relish the prospect of being called by my Christian name, for, as I have already said, I was a proud child, so I did not reply.

"Unable to answer a plain question!" observed Mrs. Marks, bespeaking the attention of Mrs. Digby with her raised forefinger; "does not know its own name!"

"My name is Miss Burns," I said indignantly.

"Does not know the difference between a surname and a Christian name!" continued Mrs. Marks, commenting on my obtuseness. "Come," she charitably added, to aid the efforts of my infant mind, "are we to call you Jane, Louisa, Mary, Lucy, Alice?"

I remained silent.

"This looks like obstinacy," remarked Mrs. Marks, in a tone of discovery. "Let us reason like rational beings," she added, forgetting I was only a little animal: "if I don't know your Christian name, how am I to call you?"

"Sarah never called me by my Christian name," I bluntly replied.

"Miss Burns," solemnly inquired Mrs. Marks, "do you mean to establish a parallel? May I know who and what you take me for?"

"You are the housekeeper," I answered.

Alas! why has the plain truth the power of

offending so many people besides Mrs. Marks, and who, like her, too, scorn to attribute their wrath to its true cause?

"You have been asked for your Christian name," she said, irefully; "with unparalleled obstinacy you have refused to tell it; you shall be called Burns, and go to bed at once."

The sentence was immediately carried into effect; I was taken to the next room, undressed, and hoisted up into the tall four-posted bedstead which nightly received Mrs. Marks, and left there to darkness and my reflections. But no punishment from those I did not love ever had affected me. I was soon fast asleep.

Memory is a succession of vivid pictures and sudden blanks. I remember my first evening at Thornton House more distinctly than the incidents of last week, but the days that followed it are wrapt in a dim mist. But much that then seemed mysterious on account of my ignorance, I have since learned to understand.

My grandfather was a country gentleman of good family, but of eccentric character. He had from a youth devoted himself to science, and renounced the world. I believe he knew and studied everything, but his learning led to no result, save that of diminishing a fortune which had never been

very ample, and of burdening still more heavily his encumbered estate. I have often thought what a dull life my poor mother must have led with him in that gloomy old house, and I can scarcely wonder that, when a man, young, amiable, and rather good-looking than plain, was imprudently thrown in her way, she knew not how to resist the temptation of love and liberty.

Mr. Thornton never forgave them. Soon after the elopement of his daughter he went abroad on some scientific errand, leaving his property to the care of lawyers, and his house to Mrs. Marks, the widow of a scientific man, whom he had taken for his housekeeper. He returned to Leigh about the time of my father's death, unaltered in temper or feelings. Wrapt in his books and studies, he went nowhere and saw no one. Fate having chosen to burden him with two feminine guests—his niece and myself—he did his best to elude the penalty, by keeping away from us both.

Miss Grainger's sojourn at Thornton House was caused by an indiscretion, in which beautiful young ladies will sometimes indulge. She had chosen to divert from the plain daughter of an aunt, with whom she resided, the affections of her betrothed, who was also my grandfather's heir. Edward Thornton lost his intended and her ten thousand

pounds, and the beautiful Edith exchanged a luxurious abode and fashionable life for Thornton House and the society of her uncle. A rose and an owl would have been as well matched. Mr. Thornton shunned his niece with all his might; and, not being able to forgive her the sin of her birth, he saw still less of his grand-daughter.

A room near that of Mrs. Marks was fitted up for me. There I spent my days, occasionally enlivened by the sound of her alarum-bell; my old books and playthings my only company. Even childish errors win their retribution. I had been an exclusive, unsociable child, caring but for one being, and contemning every other affection and companionship; no one now cared for me. Miss Murray sent me my things, and troubled herself about nothing else; my grandfather I never saw; his niece came not near me; Mrs. Digby imitated her mistress. I was left to Mrs. Marks; she might have been negligent and tyrannical with utter impunity; but though she still considered me in the light of a little animal, and persisted in calling me "Burns," she did her duty by me.

My wants were attended to; but that was all; I was left to myself, to solitude and liberty. I was again sickly and languid. To go up and down stairs, to play in the court, wander in the grounds,

or walk in the wild and neglected garden behind the house, were exertions beyond my strength. I remained in my room, a voluntary captive, satisfied with looking out of the window. It commanded the grounds below, a green and wild desert, with a bright stream gliding through, and looked beyond them over a soft and fertile tract of country bounded by a waving line of low hills, which opened to afford, as in a vision, a sudden view of some glorious world,—a glimpse of blending sea and heaven, limited, yet giving that sense of infinite, for which the mind ever longs and which the eye ever seeks.

I sat at that window for hours daily, and grew not wearied of gazing. The sea, glittering as glass in sunshine, of the deepest blue in shadow, dark and sullen, or white with foam in tempest; the mellow and pastoral look of the distant country; the varied beauty of the park, with its ancient trees, woodland aspect, and bounding deer; the high grass below, suddenly swept down by the strong wind, and ever rising again; the slow and stately clouds that passed on in the blue air above me, with a sense, motion, and in a region of their own, were not, however, the objects that attracted me so irresistibly.

The avenue stretching beneath my gaze, with

its dark and stately trees, under which cool shadows ever lingered, and the grass-grown path lit up by gliding sunbeams, had my first and last look. Untaught by disappointment, I kept watching for Cornelius O'Reilly. My plans were laid, and I one day tested their practicability. Deceived by a strong resemblance in height and figure, I slipped down, unlocked a side-door which nobody minded, and thus admitted into Thornton House a handsome fashionable-looking man, who seemed surprised, and asked for Miss Grainger. I stole away without answering. The same evening Mrs. Marks called me to her presence. She sat down, and made me stand before her. "Burns," she said, "was it you who let in young Mr. Thornton by the side-door?"

"Yes," I replied, unhesitatingly.

"Who told you to do so?"

"No one; I did it out of my own head."

"You did it on purpose?"

"Yes, I saw him coming, and went down."

Mrs. Marks looked astounded.

"Burns! what could be your motive?"

I remained mute, though the question was put under every variety of shape.

"Unfortunate little creature!" observed Mrs. Marks, whose dull eyes beamed compassion on me,

"it does not know the nature of its own blind impulses."

Thanks to this charitable conclusion, I escaped punishment; but on the following day I found the side-door secured by a high bolt beyond my reach. I did not, however, give up the point. A wicket-gate opened from the garden on the grounds, and commanded a side view of the avenue; there, every fine day, I took my post, still vainly hoping for the coming of Cornelius.

It was thus I sometimes saw my cousin Edith. Her great loveliness and rich attire impressed me strongly. Her room was below mine. I daily heard her, like a fair lady in her bower, playing on her lute, or warbling sweet songs; she was the beauty and enchanted princess of all my fairy tales; yet, when we met, the only notice she took of me was a cold and gentle "How are you, dear?" the reply to which she never stopped to hear. She generally walked with Mrs. Digby, who, drawing her attention to my evident admiration, never failed to observe as they passed by me, "The child can't take her eyes off you, Ma'am." "Hush! Digby," invariably replied the fair Edith, in a tone implying that she disapproved of the liberty, although the sweetness of her disposition induced her to forgive it. Mrs. Digby, however, persisted

in repeating her offence, even when I was not looking, and was always checked with the same gentleness.

One day, when I came down, I found Miss Grainger no longer in the company of Mrs. Digby, but sitting in an arbour with a fair and fashionable lady of thirty, or so, whom she called Bertha, and who, after eyeing me through her gold eyeglass, impressively observed, as, without noticing them, I took my usual place: "Edith, such are the consequences of love-matches! Mr. Langton—"

"But he is so old, Bertha!" interrupted Edith, pouting.

"So I thought of Mr. Brand, when I married him; but it is not generous to be always thinking of age. Ah! love is very selfish, Edith."

Miss Grainger raised her handkerchief to her eyes.

"My dearest girl," said the lady, "be generous; be unselfish. Mr. Langton will be so kind—he has the means, you know,—and poor Edward—poor in every sense—can only— Edward, what brought you here?"

She addressed the same young man whom I had admitted, and who had now suddenly stepped from behind the arbour where the two ladies sat. He gave the speaker an angry look, and taking

the hand of my cousin, he hastily led her away down one of the garden paths, talking earnestly. The lady bit her lip, followed them with a provoked glance, and stood waiting their return. She had to wait some time. At length young Mr. Thornton appeared; he looked pale, desperate, strode past the lady, opened the gate by which I stood, entered the grounds, leaped over a fence, and vanished. Edith came up more slowly. She was crying, and looked frightened. The lady went up to her.

"Well!" she said, eagerly.

"Edward says he 'll kill himself!" sobbed Edith.

"My dear," sighed her friend, "Arthur said so too when we parted. He is alive still. I am Edward's sister, and yet, you see, I am quite easy. Do not fret, dear. You must come with me to the Mitfords this evening."

"I can't, Bertha."

"My dearest girl, you must. It is extremely selfish to brood over sorrow."

With this she kissed her, and they entered the house together.

"Burns, come in to dinner," said the voice of Mrs. Marks, addressing me from the arched doorway.

I obeyed, and, for some unexplained reason, was consigned to my room during the rest of the day, which I spent by the window, still watching for my friend with a patient persistent hope that would not be conquered. I was so absorbed that I never heard Mrs. Marks enter, until she said, close behind me, "Burns, what are you always looking out of that window for?"

Before I could reply, a sharp voice inquired from the corridor—

"Mrs. Marks, who is it I have twice this day heard you addressing by the extraordinary name of Burns?"

We both looked round. Mrs. Marks had left my door open; exactly opposite it stood a ladder leading to a trap-door in the roof of the house, through which Mr. Thornton, who had gone to survey the progress of an observatory he was causing to be erected there, now appeared descending.

"That child won't tell her other name, Sir," replied Mrs. Marks, reddening.

"Do you know it?"

"She won't tell it, Sir."

My grandfather fastened his keen black eyes full on me, and signed me to approach. He stood on the last step of the ladder. I went up to him; he gave my head a quick survey, then suddenly fixed

the tip of his forefinger somewhere towards the summit, and exclaimed, in a tone that showed he had settled the bump and the question: "Firmness large; secretiveness too; but good moral and intellectual development. What is your name?"

"Margaret," I replied, unhesitatingly.

Margaret had been my mother's name. Mr. Thornton turned away at once.

"Margaret, go back to your room," shortly said Mrs. Marks.

Mr. Thornton was descending the staircase. He stopped to turn round, and observed, with great emphasis, "Miss Margaret, will you please to go back to your room?"

He went down without uttering another word.

Mrs. Marks became scarlet; and, declaring that she was not going to Miss Margaret any one, she retired to her own apartment in high dudgeon. I thought to spend this autumn evening, as usual, in the companionship of lamp, fire, books, and toys; but scarcely had Mrs. Marks brought me my light, and retired again, when Miss Grainger entered.

Was it tardy pity? Had my grandfather spoken to her? or had she come, like the fairy godmother of poor forlorn Cinderella, to visit me in all her splendour, and fill my room with a fleeting vision

of elegance and beauty? Her tears had ceased, her sorrow was over; she was evidently going out for the evening; and she looked triumphant, like a long-captive princess emerging from her enchanted tower. Her dark ringlets fell on shoulders of ivory; her bright blue eyes sparkled with joy; the sweetest of smiles played on her enchanting face. A robe of rose-coloured silk fell to her feet in rustling folds; strings of pearls were wreathed in her hair, encircled her neck, and clasped her white arms. I gazed on her, mute with wonder and admiration. She looked gracious; but I ventured to touch her! She drew back with extreme alarm, glanced at her robe, and gently extending her hands before her person, to keep me at a safe distance, she smiled sweetly at me, with—"Yes, I know; good night, dear."

With this she vanished.

Why did she leave me far more chill and lonely than she had found me? Why did I remember the tender caresses of my dead father, and the embrace of Cornelius in the garden, and feel very dreary and desolate? Providence often answers our feelings and our thoughts in a manner that is both touching and strange. Ere long the door again opened; I looked up, and saw—Cornelius O'Reilly.

## CHAPTER V.

WHAT between surprise and joy, I could neither move nor speak. When the young man closed the door, came up to me, sat down by me, and, with a kiss, asked cheerfully, "Well, Margaret, how are you?" I hid my face on his shoulder, and began to cry. But he made me look up, and said with concern, "How pale and thin you are, child!—are you ill?"

"No," I answered, astonished.

Cornelius looked around him, at the fire with the guard, at the table with my books and playthings, at me; then observed: "Why are you alone?"

"I am always alone."

"Does no one come near you?"

"No one."

"Does your grandfather never send for you?"

"Oh no!"

"Who takes care of you?"

"Mrs. Marks, the housekeeper."

"Do you never leave this room?"

"I can go down if I like; but it tires me."

"Poor little thing! how do you spend your time?"

"In the daytime I look out of the window; in the evening I play by myself."

"Have you no children to play with?"

"No, none."

"And what do you learn?"

"Nothing."

"Nothing!" he echoed.

"Yes, nothing."

"Have you no lessons."

"No; Mrs. Marks says, that, as I can read well, and write a little, it is enough."

"Enough!" indignantly exclaimed Cornelius; but he checked himself to observe, "Mrs. Marks knows nothing about it; a good education is the least Mr. Thornton can give his grand-daughter."

He was not questioning me; but I looked at him, and said, bluntly, "I am to get a common-place education; I am not to be a lady."

"Who says so?" indignantly asked Cornelius.

"Mr. Thornton."

"How do you know?"

"He said it, before me, to Miss Grainger. He said I was to be neither a governess nor a lady; and that a common-place education, and some decent occupation, were to be my destiny." The words had stung me to the quick at the time, and had never been forgotten. As I repeated them, the blood rushed up to the face of Cornelius O'Reilly; his look lit; his lip trembled with all the quickness of emotion of his race.

"But you shall be a lady," he exclaimed, with rapid warmth. "Your father, who was an Irish gentleman born and bred, gave me the education of a gentleman; and I will give you the education of a lady,—so help me God!"

He drew and pressed me to him. I looked up at him, and said, "I should not take up much room." He seemed surprised at the observation.

I continued—"And Mrs. Marks says I eat so little." Cornelius looked perplexed.

"Will you take me with you?" I asked earnestly.

Cornelius drew in a long breath.

"You are an odd child!" he said.

I passed my arms around his neck, and asked again, "Will you take me with you?"

"Why do you want me to take you?"

I hung down my head, and did not answer. The strange unconquerable shyness of childhood was on me, and rendered me tongue-tied. Cornelius gently raised my face, so that it met his look, and smiled at seeing it grow hot and flushed beneath his gaze.

"Do you really want me to take you?" he asked, after a pause.

I looked up quickly; I said nothing; but if childhood has no words to render its feelings, it has eloquent looks easily read. Cornelius was at no loss to understand the meaning of mine.

"Indeed, then, if I can I will," he replied earnestly.

"Oh! we can get out by the back-door," I said, quickly.

"My dear," answered Cornelius, gravely, "never leave a house by the back-door, unless in case of fire; besides, it would look like an elopement. We must speak to Mr. Thornton."

I could not see the necessity of this; but I submitted to his decision, and, taking his hand, I accompanied him downstairs. No stray domestic was visible, not even the little servant appeared. Cornelius looked around him, then resolutely knocked at the door of my grandfather's study.

A sharp "Come in!" authorized us to enter. This time Mr. Thornton had exchanged the magnifying glass and the beetle for a pair of compasses and an immense map which covered the whole table. He looked up; and, on perceiving Cornelius, exclaimed, with a ludicrous expression of dismay, "Sir, have you brought me another little girl?"

"No, Sir," replied Cornelius smiling; "this is the same."

"Oh! the same, is it?"

"No; not quite the same," resumed Cornelius; "the child, whom I left here a month ago, is strangely altered; question her yourself, Sir, and ascertain the manner in which, without your wish or knowledge, I feel assured, your grand-daughter has been treated in your house."

My grandfather gave the young man a sharp look, and his brown face darkened in meaning if not in hue.

"Come here," he said, addressing me, "and remember, that, though you have large secretiveness, I must have the truth."

I looked at Cornelius; he nodded; I went up to Mr. Thornton, who looked keenly at my face, and, as if something there suggested the question, abruptly asked, "Do you get enough to eat?"

"Yes, Sir."

"Why don't you eat, then?"

"But I do eat."

"Why does Mrs. Marks strike you?"

"She never strikes me," I replied indignantly.

"But why does she ill-use you?"

"She does not ill-use me; she dare not."

Mr. Thornton looked at Cornelius with ironical triumph. The young man seemed disgusted, and said warmly, "I never meant, Sir, that Margaret Burns was a starved, ill-used child. Heaven forbid! But I meant to say that she is left to solitude, idleness, and disgraceful ignorance."

"Upon my word, Mr. O'Reilly," observed Mr. Thornton, pushing away his map, as if to survey Cornelius better,—"upon my word, you meddle in my family arrangements with praiseworthy coolness."

"Mr. Thornton," replied Cornelius, not a whit disconcerted, and looking at him very calmly, "I brought the child to you; this gives me a right to interfere, which you have yourself acknowledged by not checking me at once."

Mr. Thornton gave him an odd look, then grunted a sort of assent, looked at his map, and said impatiently—

"Granted; but not that the child is not treated as she ought to be. Still, within reasonable

bounds, she shall be judge in her own case. Do you hear?" he added, turning towards me, "if you want for anything, say so, and you shall get it."

"I want to go away," I said at once.

"Very well; I shall send you to school."

"But I want to go with Mr. O'Reilly."

"Mr. O'Reilly is welcome to you," sarcastically replied my grandfather; "he may take you, drop you on the way, do what he likes with you—if he chooses to have you!" I ran to Cornelius.

"Shall I get ready?" I asked eagerly.

"My dear," he gently replied, "Mr. Thornton means to send you to school, where you will learn many things."

"She will not be troubled with much learning," drily observed Mr. Thornton.

"Surely, Sir," remonstrated Cornelius, "the poor child is to be educated?"

"Sir, she is not to be a fine lady."

"Allow me to observe—"

"Sir, I will allow you to take her away and do what you like with her; but not to observe."

"I take you at your word," warmly replied Cornelius, on whom Mr. Thornton bestowed an astonished look; "take her I will, and educate her too. It would be strange if I could not do for her father's child what that father did for me!

I thank you, Sir, for that which brought me here, but which I scarcely knew how to ask for."

My grandfather looked at me, and made an odd grimace, as if not considering me a particularly valuable present. Still, and though taken at his word, he seemed scarcely pleased.

"Well," he said at length, "be it so. I certainly do not care much about the child myself, not being able to forget where that face of hers came from—you do; you want to make a penniless lady of her; she wants to go with you: have both your wish. If she should prove troublesome or in the way, send her back to me, or, in my absence, to Mrs. Marks. You distinctly understand that I am willing to provide for her; though, I suppose," he added, looking at Cornelius, "I must not propose—"

"No, Sir," gravely interrupted the young man.

"Very well; provide for her too, since such is your fancy. Take her; you are welcome to her."

And thus it was decided; and in less than a quarter of an hour we had not only left Thornton House, but the surly porter at the lodge had closed his iron gates upon us, and we were on our way to Ryde, whence Cornelius wished to proceed to London, straight on, that same evening.

After walking on for awhile in utter silence, Cornelius said to me—

"Are you tired, Margaret?"

"Oh no!" I answered eagerly.

Indeed the question seemed to take away my sense of fatigue. For some time, the fear of being left behind lent me fictitious strength; but at length my sore and weary feet could carry me no further; in the wildest and most desolate part of the road I was obliged to stop short.

"What is the matter?" asked Cornelius.

"I can't go on," I replied, despondingly.

"Can't you, indeed?"

"No," I said, sitting down on a milestone, and feeling ready to cry, "I can't at all."

"Well, then, if you can't at all," coolly observed Cornelius, "I must carry you."

"I am very heavy!" I objected, astonished at the suggestion.

He laughed, and attempted to lift me up, but I resisted.

"Oh! it will fatigue you so!" I said.

"No, nature has given me such extraordinary strength that I can bear without fatigue burdens —like you, for instance—beneath which other men would sink."

He raised me with an ease that justified his

assertion. I clasped my arms around his neck, rested my head on his shoulder, and feeling how firm and secure was his hold, I yielded with a pleasurable sensation to a mode of conveyance which I found both novel and luxurious. I could not however help asking once, with lingering uneasiness, "If he did not feel tired?"

"No; strange to say, and heavy as you are, I do not: but why do you shiver? Are you cold?"

"No, thank you," I replied, but my teeth chattered as I spoke.

"I hope it is nothing worse than cold," uneasily observed Cornelius, stopping short; "undo the clasp of my cloak, and bring it around you."

I obeyed; he helped to wrap me up in the warm and ample folds, and we resumed our journey, a moment interrupted. He walked fast; we soon reached Ryde; but he would not let me come to light until we were safely housed. I heard a staid voice observing—

"Your carpet-bag, I presume, Sir. It will be quite safe here."

"It is not a carpet-bag," replied Cornelius, unwrapping me, and depositing me in a small ill-lit back parlour, with a grim landlady looking on.

"Your carpet-bag will be quite safe here," she resumed.

"I have none." She looked aghast. A little girl, and no carpet-bag!

"Yours, Sir, I presume?" she steadily observed.

"Mine!" echoed Cornelius, reddening, "no."

"Your sister, I presume, Sir?" persisted the landlady.

"She is no relative," he shortly answered; then, without heeding her, he felt my forehead, took my hand, said both were burning; looked at his watch, pondered, and finally startled the landlady —who had remained in the room taciturn and suspicious—with the abrupt query—

"Is there a medical man about here, Ma'am?"

"There is Mr. Wood."

"Be so kind as to send for him; I fear this child is ill."

She looked mistrustful, but complied with the request, and in about ten minutes returned with a sleek little man in black, who bowed himself into the room, peeped at my tongue, held my wrist delicately suspended between his thumb and forefinger, then for the space of a minute looked intently at the ceiling, with his right eye firmly shut, and his tongue shrewdly screwed in the left corner of his mouth. At length he dropped my hand, opened his eye, put in his tongue, and gravely said:

"The young lady is only a little feverish."

"You are quite sure it is nothing worse?" observed Cornelius, seeming much relieved.

"Quite sure," decisively replied Mr. Wood "but concerning the young lady — not your daughter, Sir?"

"No!" was the indignant answer.

"Concerning this young lady," placidly resumed Mr. Wood, "I wish to observe that she is of an excitable temperament, requiring— Not your sister?" he added, again breaking off into an inquiry.

"No, Sir," impatiently replied Cornelius.

"Of an excitable temperament, requiring gentle exercise, indulgence, little study, and none of those violent emotions," (here he held up his forefinger in solemn warning,) "none of those violent emotions which sap the springs of life in the youthful being. Not your ward?" he observed, with another negative inquiry.

"No!—Yes!" hesitatingly said Cornelius.

"In the youthful being—" again began Mr. Wood.

"Excuse me, Sir," impatiently interrupted Cornelius, "but the coach will soon pass by; is there anything that can be done for the child?"

"Yes, Sir," drily answered Mr. Wood, "there are several things to be done for the young lady; the first is to put her to bed directly."

"To bed?" uneasily said Cornelius.

"Directly. The second, to administer a sedative draught, that will make her spend the night in a state of deep repose."

"Then we must actually sleep here?"

"Of deep repose. The third is not to attempt moving her for the next twelve hours."

"Remember, Sir, you said it was only feverishness."

"It is nothing more *now*," replied the inexorable Mr. Wood, in a tone threatening anything from scarlatina to typhus if his directions were disregarded. Cornelius sighed, submitted, asked for the sedative draught, and consigned me to the care of the grim landlady.

I allowed her to undress me and put me to bed in a dull little room upstairs; but when she attempted to make me take the sedative, duly sent round by Mr. Wood, I buried my face in the pillow. Though she said "Miss!" in a most threatening accent, she could not conquer my mute obstinacy. She departed in great indignation.

Soon after she had left, the door opened, and Cornelius entered. He looked grave. I prepared for a lecture, but he only sat down by me and said very gently, "Margaret, why will you not drink the sedative?"

I did not answer. He tasted the beverage, then said earnestly, "It is not unpleasant; try."

He wanted to approach the cup to my lips, but I turned away, and said with some emotion, "I don't want to sleep."

"Why so, child?"

"Because I shall not wake up in time; you will go away and leave me."

"Margaret, why should I leave you?"

"Because you don't like me as Papa did; you do not care about me," I replied, a little excitedly; for I was now quite conscious that the affection was all on my side.

He looked surprised at the reproach and all it implied, and to my mortification he also looked amused. I turned my face to the wall; he bent over me and saw that my eyes were full of tears.

"Crying!" he said chidingly.

"You laugh at me," I replied indignantly.

"Which is a shame," he answered, vainly striving to repress a smile; "but whether or not, Margaret, you must oblige me by drinking this."

He spoke authoritatively. I yielded, and took the cup from him; but in so doing I gave him a look which must have been rather appealing, for he said with some warmth, "On my word, child, I shall not leave you behind. Why, I would as soon give up a pet lamb to the butcher as let you go back to Thornton House,—or turn out a poor un-

fledged bird from the nest as forsake a helpless little creature like you."

I drank at once. To reward my obedience, Cornelius said he would stay with me until I had fallen asleep. I tried to delay the moment as long as I could, but, conquered by a power mightier than my will, I was gradually compelled to yield. I remember the amused smile of the young man at my unavailing efforts to keep my eyes open and fixed on his face; then follows a sudden blank and darkness, into which even he has vanished.

I awoke the next morning cool, well, and free from fever. The landlady dressed me in surly silence, then led me down to the little parlour, where I found Cornelius reading the newspaper by the breakfast table. He seemed much pleased to find that the fever had left me, and observed with a smile, "Well, Margaret, did I run away?"

I hung down my head ashamed.

"Why, my poor child," he added, drawing me towards him, "I should be a perfect savage to dream of such a thing; besides, how ungallant to go and desert a lady in distress! Never more could Cornelius O'Reilly—a disgrace to his name and country—show his face after so dark a deed."

He was laughing at me again; I did not mind it now; but as the grim landlady, who had lingered by, looked mystified, Cornelius amused himself by

treating me with the most attentive and fastidious politeness during the whole of breakfast-time. To complete her satisfaction, and to make up for the missing carpet-bag, she was edified by the arrival of Miss Burns's luggage from Thornton House.

We left early. We rode outside the stage-coach. It was a fine autumn day, and the journey was pleasant until evening came on; Cornelius then drew me closer to him, and shared with me the folds of his ample cloak. The unusual warmth and motion soon sent me to sleep. Once or twice I woke to the momentary consciousness of a starlight night, and trees and houses rapidly passing before me; but after this all was darkness; the cloak had shrouded me completely. I merely opened my eyes to close them again and fall asleep, with my head resting against Cornelius, and his arm passed around me to save me from falling.

I have a vague remembrance of reaching a large and noisy city, of leaving the stage-coach to enter a cab, where I again fell fast asleep, and at length of awaking with a start, as Cornelius said, "Margaret, we are at home."

The cab had stopped; Cornelius had got out; he lifted me down even as he spoke, and the cab rolled away along the lonely lane in which we stood.

## CHAPTER VI.

I FELT a little bewildered. The night and the spot were both dark; all I could see was a low garden-wall, half lost in the shadow of a few tall trees, and a narrow wooden door. The gleam of light that appeared through the chinks, and the sound of a quick step on the gravel within, spared Cornelius the trouble of ringing. The door opened of its own accord, and on the threshold appeared a lady in black, holding a low lamp in her right hand. We entered; she closed the door upon us, and, almost immediately, flung the arm that was free around the neck of Cornelius.

"God bless you!" she exclaimed eagerly, and speaking in a warm ardent tone, that sounded like a gentle echo of his; "God bless you! I have been so wretched!"

"Did you not get my letter?"

"Yes, but I had such a dream!"

"A dream! Oh Kate!" he spoke with jesting reproach, but pausing in the path, he stooped and kissed his sister several times, each time more tenderly.

"How is the child? Where is she?" asked Miss O'Reilly.

"She is here, and well. By the bye, I have left her little property outside."

"Deborah shall fetch it. Take her in."

We were entering the house, which stood at the end of the garden.

"This way, Margaret," said Cornelius, leading me into a small, but comfortable and elegant-looking parlour, which took my fancy at once. The furniture, though simple, was both good and handsome; the walls were adorned with a few pictures and engravings in gilt frames; a well-filled bookcase faced the rosewood piano; a large table, covered with books, occupied the centre of the room, and a stand of splendid flowers stood in the deep bow-window.

"Well!" carelessly said Miss O'Reilly, who had followed us in almost immediately, "where is that little Sassenach girl?"

"Here she is, Kate," replied Cornelius, leading

me to his sister; he stood behind me, his hand lightly resting on my shoulder, and looking at her, I felt sure, for, in the stoic sadness of her gaze, there was something of a glance returned. She lowered the light, gave me a cursory look, put by the lamp, and sat down on a low chair by the fire, on which she kept her eyes intently fixed.

Miss O'Reilly was very like her brother, and almost as good-looking, though at least ten or twelve years older. She was fresh as a rose, and had the dark hair, finely arched eyebrows, clear hazel eyes, and handsome features of Cornelius; but the expression of countenance was different. It was as decided, but more calm; as kind, but scarcely as good-humoured. She was very simply attired in black; her glossy and luxuriant hair was braided, and fastened at the back of her head with jet pins; jet bracelets clasped her wrists. As she sat leaning back in her chair, her hands clasped on her knees, even that simple attire and careless attitude could not disguise the elegant symmetry of her figure; her hands were small and perfect.

"Well!" said Cornelius in a low tone.

"Well!" replied his sister, smiling at the fire with sorrowful triumph in her clear eyes; "she is like her father; she has his eyes; pity she has not his hair, instead of those pale and sickly flaxen

locks. Come here, little thing," she added, looking up at me, and holding out her hand.

I hesitated.

"She is very shy, Kate," said Cornelius.

"I shall cure her of her shyness. Come here, Midge."

I obeyed, and took her extended hand. She had the open, direct manner of which children are quick to feel the power; her likeness to her brother made me more communicative than I usually was with strangers.

"My name is not Midge," I said to her.

"Then it ought to have been, you mite of a thing!"

"My name is Margaret; it was Mamma's name."

Miss O'Reilly dropped my hand, and rose somewhat abruptly. Then she took my hand again and said calmly—

"Come, child, you look dusty and tired, after your journey."

She led me upstairs to a cheerful-looking bedroom, where she unpacked my wardrobe, and changed my whole attire, with a prompt dexterity that seemed natural to her. When we returned to the parlour we found Cornelius lying at full length on a sofa drawn before the hearth; a dark cushion pillowed his handsome head; the flickering fire-

light played on his face. His sister went up to him at once; she passed her white hand in his dark hair, and bending over him, said tenderly, as if speaking to a child—

"Poor boy! you are tired."

He shook his head, and laughed up in her face.

"Not a bit, Kate. Where is she?"

He half raised his head to look for me; signed me to approach, and made room for me on the sofa. I sat down and looked at him and his sister, who stood lingering there, smiling silently over him, and still passing her slender fingers in his luxuriant hair. The light fell on their two faces, almost equally handsome, and to which their striking resemblance gave a charm beyond that of mere contrast. To trace in both the same symmetrical outlines of form and feature, was to recognize the loveliness of nature's gifts, received and perpetuated for generations in the same race; and to look at them thus in their familiar tenderness, was to feel the beauty and holiness of kindred blood. Child as I was, I was moved with the tender sweetness of Miss O'Reilly's smile; it preceded however a question more kind than romantic.

"What will you have with your tea? Ham?"

"Nothing, Kate; we dined on the road."

"Will she?"

"You mean—"

"Yes," she interrupted impatiently.

He looked at his sister, who went up to the table, then put the question to me. I wanted for nothing; so Miss O'Reilly simply rang the bell; a demure-looking servant brought in the tray. When the tea was made and poured out, Miss O'Reilly said to me, in her short way—

"Child, Thing, give that cup to Cornelius."

"But my name is Margaret," I objected, a little nettled at being called "Thing."

"I know it is," she replied in a low tone.

"Margaret," musingly repeated Cornelius, taking the cup I was handing to him, "diminutives, Meg, Peg, and by way of variety Peggy; which do you prefer, child?"

"I don't like any of them," I frankly replied.

"Mar-ga-ret! three syllables! I could not afford the time; Katherine has come down to Kate, —you must be Meg."

I sat at the table taking my tea. I laid down the cup with dismay.

"I don't like Meg," I said.

"Well then, Peg."

"I don't like Peg, either."

"Well then, Peggy."

"I hate Peggy!" I indignantly exclaimed.

"Let the child alone!" said Miss O'Reilly.

"Meg, my dear, a little more milk if you please," calmly observed Cornelius. Though ready to cry with mortification, I acknowledged the name by complying with his request.

"Thank you, Meg," he said, returning the milk-jug.

"Let the child alone," again put in his sister.

"She is my property, and I shall call her as I choose," quietly replied Cornelius. "I don't like the name of Mar–ga–ret."

"Papa said there was not a prettier name," I objected.

"That is a matter of taste," almost sharply replied Cornelius; "I think Katherine is a much prettier name."

He reddened as he spoke, whilst his sister pushed back her untasted tea.

"He said Margaret was the name of a flower," I persisted,—"of the China-aster."

"Which you do not resemble a bit," inexorably replied Cornelius; "the garden has shorter and prettier names: Rose, Lily, Violet, etc."

"I like my own name best."

"Meg? No; well then, Peg? What!—not Peg! which then?"

"I don't care which," I replied despondingly.

He saw that my eyes were full of tears, and yet that I submitted.

"Poor little thing!" he observed with a touch of pity; "I must think of something else.—Let me see. Eureka! Kate, what do you say to Daisy, the botanical diminutive of Margaret?"

"Anything you like, Cornelius," she replied, sadly, "but don't teaze the poor child."

"She shall decide."

He called me to him, and left the matter to me. I was glad to escape from Meg and Peg; and Daisy I was called from that hour.

"You already have it quite your own way with that child," observed Miss O'Reilly, looking at her brother; "and yet she looks a little wilful."

"That is just what makes it pleasant having one's way with her," he replied, smiling down at me, as if amused at his triumph over my obstinacy, and gently pulling my hair by way of caress. "News from the city?" he added after a while.

"There came a message yesterday and two today."

Cornelius shook his head impatiently, in a manner habitual to him, and which was ever displacing the heavy masses of his dark hair, but, catching the eye of his sister, he smoothed his brow and said, smiling—

"I am glad I am so precious."

"It was Mr. Trim who came this evening."

"Very kind of him to call on my handsome sister when I am out of the way."

"He says it is a pity you do not give more of your mind to business."

"I give ninety pounds' worth a year," disdainfully replied Cornelius, "the exact amount of my salary."

"He has got his long-promised government office, with a salary of five hundred a year," continued Miss O'Reilly.

Cornelius half started up on one elbow, to exclaim gaily—

"Kate! has he made you an offer?"

"Nonsense," she replied impatiently, "who is to take the place Trim is leaving vacant?"

"And to do his work," answered Cornelius, indolently sinking back into his previous attitude; "Faith! I don't know, Kate."

"Trim leaves next month," said Miss O'Reilly, looking at her brother.

"Let him, Kate."

"Will you allow that Briggs to step in?"

"Why not, poor fellow?"

Miss O'Reilly's brown eyes sparkled. She gave the fire a vigorous and indignant poke.

"Will you let that Briggs walk upon you?" she asked vehemently.

"Yes," answered Cornelius, yawning slightly, "I will, Kate."

"You have no spirit!"

"None."

He spoke with irritating carelessness. From reproach she changed to argument.

"It would make a great difference in the salary, Cornelius!"

"And in the work, Kate. I shudder to think of the dull letters that unfortunate Briggs will have to write. The tedious additions, subtractions, and divisions he must go through, make my head ache for him."

"Do you fear work, Cornelius?"

"I hate it, Kate."

Again she poked the fire; then looked up at her brother, and said decisively—

"I don't believe it."

He laughed.

"You idle? Nonsense! I don't believe it."

"Then you ought; nothing but the direct necessity daily hunts me to the city."

"I hate the city!"

"Why so, poor thing? It is only a little smoky, dingy, noisy, and foggy, after all."

"I wish," hotly observed Miss O'Reilly, "that instead of pulling that unfortunate child's hair as if it were the ear of a spaniel, you would talk sense. Come here, Primrose," she added, impatiently, addressing me.

Instead of going I looked at Cornelius. I sat by him on the edge of the sofa, and he was in the act of mechanically unrolling a stray lock of my hair.

"Well!" said Miss O'Reilly.

He smiled; but his look said I was to obey his sister; I went up to her a little reluctantly. She made me sit down on a low cushion at her feet, then resumed—

"Cornelius, will you talk sense?"

"Kate, I will."

"Do you, or do you not, like the life you have chosen?"

He did not answer.

"I always thought a stool in an office unworthy of your talents and education. If you do not like it, leave it; if you do like it, seek at least to rise."

"Viz.: Get up on a higher stool, do more work, earn more money, and end the year as I began it—a poor devil of a clerk."

"Why be a clerk at all?"

"Because, though I am idle, I must work to live. Ask me no more, Kate; I have no more to tell you."

He threw himself back on the sofa in a manner that implied a sufficient degree of obstinacy.

"Will you have any supper?" asked his sister, as composedly as if nothing had passed between them.

"Yes, Kate, my dear," he answered pleasantly. She rose and left the room. As the door closed on her, Cornelius half rose and bent forward; from careless his face became serious; from indifferent, thoughtful and attentive, like that of one engaged in close argument; then he looked up and shook his head with a triumphant smile; but chancing to catch my eye, as I sat facing him on the low stool where Miss O'Reilly had left me, he started slightly, and exclaimed, with a touch of impatience—

"Don't look so like a fairy, child! take a book." And bending forward he took from the table a volume of engravings, which he handed to me, informing me I should find it more entertaining than his face. I never looked up from the volume until Deborah brought in the supper.

When the frugal meal was over, Miss O'Reilly took my hand, and led me to her brother. He was standing on the hearth; he looked down at me, laid his hand on my head, and quietly bade me good-night. His sister offered him her cheek.

"Are you not coming down again?" he asked.

"No. I feel sleepy."

He looked deep into her eyes.

"Nonsense!" she said impatiently, "no such a thing."

He passed his arm around her and smiled.

"How handsome you are, Kate!" he observed, with jesting flattery; "woe to my peace of mind when I meet—"

"Not a bit!" she interrupted with a blush and a sigh; "no dark-haired woman will ever endanger your peace. Give me a kiss and let me go."

He embraced her with a lingering tenderness that seemed to have a meaning, for she looked another way, and appeared moved. But at length he released her; she took my hand, led me up to her room, and undressed me in silence. She then looked at me, and said pointedly—

"Well!"

I thought she meant I was to kiss her. I offered to do so, but she put me away, and observed more emphatically than before—

"Well!"

I looked at her thoroughly puzzled.

"Bless me!" she said, in her warm way, "is the child a heathen! Midge, Daisy, whatever your name may be, don't you know that you must say your prayers before going to bed?"

"I always said my prayers to Papa," I replied, rather offended.

"Then kneel down and say them to me."

She sat on the edge of the bed; I knelt at her feet; she took my hands in hers, and fastening on me her clear brown eyes, she heard me to the end. Then she put me to bed, closed the curtains, and told me to sleep. I obeyed. I know not how long I had slept, when low moans awoke me. The light was still burning; I sat up softly, and looked through the opening of the curtains. The handsome sister of Cornelius was kneeling before a small table, on which stood a low lamp; its white circle of light fell on an open volume, but she was not reading; thrown back somewhat in the attitude of the penitent Magdalene, with her hands clasped, and her head sunk in her bosom, she was weeping bitterly. She whom I had seen but a few hours before fresh as a flower, cheerful, gay, was now pale as death, and seemed bowed down with grief. Tears ran down her cheek like rain, but the only words that passed her lips were those uttered by Christ in his agony on the Mount—"Thy will, not mine, be done!" And this she repeated over and over, as if vainly thirsting for the resignation she thus expressed.

I looked at her with wonder. At length she rose;

I softly sank back into my place; scarcely had I done so, when Miss O'Reilly came up to the bed and opened the curtains. I closed my eyes almost without knowing why. She bent over me, I felt her breath soft and warm on my face; then a light though lingering kiss was pressed on my cheek. I did not dare to stir until I felt her lying down by my side; when I then looked, I found the room quite dark. Miss O'Reilly remained very still; for awhile I staid awake, wondering at what I had seen, but at length I fell fast asleep.

## CHAPTER VII.

I AWOKE late on the following morning, dazzled by the sunshine which filled the room. I was alone, but on the staircase outside I heard Miss O'Reilly's voice, exclaiming—

"Deborah, will you never clean those door-steps?"

With this, she opened the door and came in. I looked at her; her cheek was fresh, her eyes were bright and clear. With a smile, she asked how I felt, said I did not look amiss, and helped me to rise and dress, chatting cheerfully all the time. A lonely breakfast awaited me in the back parlour; I looked in vain for Cornelius.

"He is gone to the City, and will not be back till five," said Miss O'Reilly. "What, already done! Why, child, how little you eat!" she added

with concern; "go into the garden, and run about for awhile."

She opened a glass door, through which came a green and sunny glimpse of a pleasant-looking garden beyond. Without being small, it had the look of a bower, and a very charming bower it was, fragrant and wild. In the centre of a grass-plot rose an old sun-dial of grey stone, with many a green mossy tint. Around wound a circular path, between which and the wall extended a broad space filled with lilac-trees, laburnums, thickets of gorse and broom, and where, though half wild and neglected, also grew, according to their season, cool blue hyacinths, yellow crocuses with their glowing hearts, gay daffodils, pale primroses, snowdrops, shy hare-bells, fair lilies of the valley, tall foxgloves of many a rich dark hue, summer roses laden with perfume, stately hollyhocks, bright china-asters, and bending chrysanthemums—"a wilderness of sweets." The wall itself, when it could be seen, was not without some charm and verdure. It was old and crumbling, but bristling with bright snapdragons, yellow with stonecrop above, and green below with dark ivy that trailed and crept along the ground. From a few rusty nails hung, torn and wild, banners of tangled honeysuckle and jasmine,

haunted by the bees of a neighbouring hive. Two tall and noble poplars, growing on either side the wooden door by which Cornelius and I had entered, cast their narrow line of waving shadow over the whole place, which they filled with a low rustling murmur. The lane behind was silent; beyond it, and everywhere around, extended gardens, wide or small, where quiet dwellings rose in the shade and shelter of embowering trees; still further on, spread a rising horizon, bounded by lines of low hills, where grey clouds lay lazily sleeping all the day long.

On this autumn morning, Miss O'Reilly's garden was little more than warm, green, and sunny. The poplars had strewn it with sere and yellow leaves, and of the flowers none remained save a few late roses, China-asters, and chrysanthemums. I walked around it, then sat down on the flag at the foot of the sun-dial, and amused myself with looking at the house.

It was one of those low-roofed, red-tiled, and antiquated abodes, which can still be seen on the outskirts of London, daily removed, it is true, to make room for the modern cottage and villa. It stood between a quiet street and a lonely lane, a plain brick building, with many-paned windows, half hid by clustering ivy, which shadowed its

projecting porch, and gave it a gloom both soft and deep. A screen of ivy sloping down to the garden-wall partly separated it from a larger house, to which, in point of fact, it belonged; both had originally formed one abode, but, for the purpose of letting, had thus been subdivided by Miss O'Reilly, whose property they had recently become. On either side, the double building was sheltered by young trees. It looked secluded, lone, and ancient: an abode where generations had lived and loved.

From contemplating it, I turned to watching a spider's web, one of my favourite occupations in our garden at Rock Cottage.

"Well!" said the frank voice of Miss O'Reilly.

I looked up; the sun fell full on the house, and on the three worn stone steps that led down to the garden, but she stood above them, beneath the ivied porch, where she looked fresh and cool, like a bright flower in the shade. She gazed at me with her head a little pensively inclined towards her right shoulder; then said gently—

"Why do you sit, instead of running about?"

"It tires me so."

"Poor little thing! but you must move. Come in; go about the house; walk up and down stairs; open the cupboards, look, do something."

"Yes, Ma'am," I replied, astonished however at her singular behests.

"You must call me Kate; say Kate."

I did so; for, like her brother, it was not easy to say her nay. With a kind smile, she sent me on my voyage of discovery. The only apartment that interested me was a room lying at the top of the house, and which I considered to be the lumber-room. It was filled with plaster casts and old dusty pictures without frames; the greater part were turned to the wall; a few that were exposed looked dull in the warm sun-light pouring in on them through the open window: before it stood a deal table, on which, after examining the pictures, I got up.

"Daisy, what are you doing there?" exclaimed Miss O'Reilly, entering the room; "come down."

I obeyed, but said in a tone of chagrin—

"I cannot see the sea!"

"I should think not. Why did you turn those pictures?"

"I found them so, Kate."

She frowned slightly; turned them back, every one, then said gravely—

"You must not come here any more; it is the study of Cornelius. He reads and writes here."

"Did he paint them?" I asked, with sudden interest.

"No," was the short answer; "they are by my father, who has been dead some years."

"Why does he not paint pictures too?"

"Bless the child!" exclaimed Miss O'Reilly, turning on me a flushed and annoyed face; but she checked herself to observe, "He is at a bank, and has neither time nor inclination for painting."

With this we left the room, and went down to the front parlour, where she worked, and I amused myself with a book until the clock struck five. I then looked up at Miss O'Reilly.

"Yes," she said, smiling, "he will soon be here." But there was a delay of ten or fifteen minutes: she saw me restless with expectation, and good-naturedly told me I might go and look out for him at the back-door. I jumped up with an eagerness that again made her smile, and having promised not to pass the threshold of the garden, I ran out to watch for Cornelius, as I had formerly so often watched for my father. The lane was green, silent, and lonely, with high hawthorn hedges, a few overshadowing trees, and a narrow path ever encroached on by grass, weeds, and low trailing plants. Ere long I saw Cornelius appear in the distance; he walked

with his eyes on the ground, and never saw me until he had reached the door. He entered, and in passing by me carelessly stroked my hair by way of greeting. To his sister, who stood waiting for him on the last step of the house, he gave the embrace without which they never met or parted.

The tea was made and waiting. Miss O'Reilly poured it out, and called me from where I sat apart, feeling shy and unnoticed, to hand his cup to her brother, who was again lying on the sofa. He asked how I had behaved.

"Too well; she is too quiet."

"Shall we send her to school?" said Cornelius.

I turned round from the table, to give him an entreating look, which he did not heed.

"She is too weak; we must teach her ourselves," replied his sister.

I heard the decision with great relief. A school was my horror. When the meal was over, I made my way to Cornelius, and half whispered—

"Will *you* teach me?"

"Perhaps so; well, don't look disappointed—I will."

"What do you know?".

"Grammar, history, geography—"

"I can vouch for the geography," interrupted Miss O'Reilly.

"We shall see."

He examined me; I did my best to answer well, and waited for his verdict with a beating heart.

"What do you think of her?" asked his sister, who now re-entered the room, which she had left for awhile.

"She won't fit in it!" replied Cornelius, giving me a perplexed look.

"What?"

"Ah! I forgot to tell you. I bought her a cot, or crib—what do you call it?—I fear she won't fit in it! Can't we shorten her?"

"You have bought her a bed!" exclaimed Miss O'Reilly, looking confounded, and laying down her work.

"Yes; come here, Daisy."

He measured me with his eye, then added triumphantly, "She will fit in it; it is just her size, Kate! see if it is not, when it arrives! just her size."

"Just her size! bless the boy! does he not mean the poor child to grow?"

"Faith!" exclaimed Cornelius, looking astonished, "I never thought of that, never!—and yet," he added thoughtfully, "I think I can remember her shorter than she is now."

"You are the most foolish lad in all Ireland!" hotly observed Miss O'Reilly, with whom, though she had left it many years, her native country was ever present.

She gave him a scolding, which he bore with perfect good-humour. A little mollified by this, she changed the subject by asking—

"Well, how did the child answer?"

"Oh,—hem! Oh, very well, of course."

He had already forgotten all about it, as I felt, with some mortification. Quite unconscious of this, he rose, opened the piano, and turning to his sister, said—

"What shall I sing you, Kate?"

"Anything you like,—one of the Melodies."

She sat back to listen, with her hand across her eyes, whilst, in a rich harmonious voice, her brother sang some of those wild and beautiful Irish melodies,—plaintive as the songs of their own land which the captives of Sion sang by the rivers of Babylon. I listened, entranced, until he closed the piano, and read aloud to his sister from a book of travels, which sent me fast asleep.

Happy are the bereaved children whom Providence leads to the harbour of such a home as I had found! Cornelius and his sister lived in a retired way; their tastes were simple; their means

moderate; but their home, though quiet, was pleasant like a shady bower, where the waving trees let in ever-new glimpses of blue sky, with gliding sun beams, and many a wandering breeze. There was a genial light and vivacity about them; an endless variety of moods, never degenerating into ill temper; a pleasant union of shrewdness, simplicity, and originality, which lent a great charm to their daily intercourse. To be with them was to breathe atmosphere of cheerful, living peace, far removed from the fatal and enervating calmness which makes a pain of repose.

I knew them at the least troubled period of their lives. They were the children, by different mothers, of an ambitious and disappointed artist, who had left Ireland ardent with hope, and, after vainly struggling against obscurity for a few years, had died in London, poor, miserable, and broken-hearted.

For some years his daughter supported herself and her young brother by teaching; then my father, who had long known them, came to her aid, and insisted on defraying the expenses of the education of Cornelius. She struggled on alone, until, about a year before I saw her, an old relative, who had never assisted her in her poverty, died, leaving her a moderate income, and the

house in which we now resided. Towards the same time Cornelius, who had completed his studies, instead of entering one of the learned professions, as his sister urged him to do, accepted of a situation in the City. This was one of the few subjects on which they differed; but it was seldom alluded to, and never allowed to disturb the harmony of their home. On most points they agreed; on none more entirely than in taking every care of their adopted child.

Cornelius had a memory tenacious of benefits and injuries. He thought himself bound to watch over the orphan daughter of his benefactor and friend. He took me, indeed, to my grandfather—my natural protector; but, on learning from Miss Murray the footing on which I was said to be treated in Mr. Thornton's house, he at once set off to obtain possession of me, "if possible," not being quite prepared for the ease with which his object was accomplished.

I rejoiced in the change, as might a plant removed from deadly shade to living sunshine. My health improved; I became more cheerful. Every day I walked out with Kate in the neighbourhood. It was then one of the prettiest suburbs about London. We lived in a street called the 'Grove,' and which deserved its name, for it was planted

with old trees, and passed like a broad walk through the gardens on either side, where, like brown nests in a green hedge, appeared a few ancient houses irregularly built, and still more irregularly scattered. But its lanes were the great attraction of this vicinity.

If we opened the garden door we entered a verdant wilderness of paths crossing one another; and each was (and there lay the charm) in itself a solitude. Country lanes may break the grand lines of a landscape; but, in the neighbourhood of a great and crowded city, every glimpse of nature is pleasant and lovely. I remember the sense of serene happiness I felt in walking out with Kate in the early morning, along a quiet path; now, alas! crowded with villas, but then called "Nightingale lane," and sheltered on one side by a cheerful orchard, with its white and fragrant blossoms in Spring, or its bending fruit in Autumn, glittering in the rising sun; and, on the other, screened by a row of elms, whose ancient roots grasped earth in the tenacious hold of ages, and whose broad base young green shoots veiled with a tender grace. The horizon on our left was bounded by an old park, a stately, motionless grove of beech-trees, above which, bending to every breeze, rose a few tall and graceful poplars; to our right, hidden in

its garden, lay our humble home. Kate, reading her favourite Thomas à Kempis, walked on, her eyes bent on the page; I followed more slowly, reading, child though I was, from the Divine book man cannot improve, and vainly tries to mar.

Between the path and the hedge which enclosed the orchard, lay a broad ditch. There grew green grasses that bent to the breeze like forests, and beneath which flowed a faint thread of water, the river of that small world, peopled with nations of insects, and which to me possessed both attraction and beauty. For there the ground-ivy trailed along the earth, its delicate blue flowers hidden by fresh leaves; there rose the purple bugle, the stately dead-nettle, with its broad leaves and white whorls, and grew the cheerful celandine, bright buttercups, the sunny dandelion, the diminutive shepherd's-purse, the starry blossoms of the chick-weed, the dark bitter-sweet with its poisonous red berries, the frail and transparent flowers of the bindweed, sheltered in the prickly hedge like shy or captive beauties, with every other common weed and plant which man despises, and God disdained not to fashion.

My communion with nature, though restricted, was very sweet. I was debarred from her wild-ness and grandeur, but I became all the more

familiar with those aspects which she takes around human homes. And is there not a great charm in the very way in which man and nature meet? The narrow garden, its flowers and shrubs so tenderly protected and cared for, the ivy that clings around the porch, the grass that half disputes the little beaten path, have a half wild, half domestic grace, I have often felt as deeply, as the romantic beauty of ancient glens, where mountain torrents make a way through pathless solitudes. My world might seem narrow, but I never found it so whilst the deep skies, with all their changes, spread above to tell of infinite, and the sweet and mysterious song of free birds, under distant cover, allured thought away to many a green and shady bower.

Not less pleasant to me were the autumn evenings. They still stand forth on the background of memory, as vivid and minutely distinct as the home scenes, by light of lamp or fire-flame, which the old masters like to paint. Cornelius loved music and poetry, those two glorious gifts of God to man. He played and sang with taste, and read well. When the piano was closed, he took down some favourite volume from the bookcase, and gave us a few scenes from Shakspeare, a grand passage from Milton, a calm meditative page from

Wordsworth. Sometimes he opened Æschylus, Sophocles, or Euripides, and, translating freely, transported us into a world gone by, but beautiful and human in its passions and sorrows. Miss O'Reilly listened attentively; then, after hearing some fine fragment from the Bound Prometheus, some stirring description from the Seven against Thebes, she would look up from her work and say, with mingled wonder and admiration—

"That is grand, Cornelius!"

"Is it not?" he would reply, with kindling glance, for they both had the same strong admiration for the heroic and great.

I should have been very happy, but for one drawback. It was natural, perhaps, that having been reared by my father, and never having known my mother, I should attach myself to Cornelius in preference to his sister. But in vain I strove to win his attention and favour; in vain I ran, not merely on his bidding, but on a word and on a look; gave him his hat and gloves in the morning; watched for him every fine evening at the garden gate; followed him about the house like his shadow, sat when he sat, happy if I could but catch his eye; in vain I showed him how devotedly fond I was of him; he treated me with the most tantalizing mixture of kindness,

carelessness, and indifference. Half the time, he did not seem to see me about the house; when he became conscious that I existed, he gave me a careless nod and smile. If I did anything for him he thanked me, and stroked my hair; yet if I looked unwell, he was quick to notice it. He occasionally made me small presents of books and toys, and every evening he devoted several hours to the task of teaching me. I worked hard to give him satisfaction, but he only took this as a matter of course; called me a good child, and, as I was quiet and silent, generally allowed me to sit somewhere near him for the rest of the evening, and this was all: he seldom caressed, he never kissed me.

With his sister Cornelius was very different, and I felt the contrast keenly. He loved her tenderly; he was proud of her beauty; he liked to call her his handsome Kate, to talk and jest with her, and often, too, to sit by her and caress her with a fondness more filial than brotherly; whilst I looked on, not merely unheeded, but wholly forgotten.

Of course I was still less thought of, when, as happened occasionally, evening visitors dropped in. I remember a dark-eyed Miss Hart, who kept up a gay quarrel with Cornelius, and of whom I was

miserably jealous, until, to my great satisfaction, she got married and went into the country; also a bald and learned Mr. Mountford, whom I disliked heartily for keeping Cornelius to himself, but who, in a lucky hour, having made an offer to Kate and being rejected, came no more; likewise Mr. Leopold Trim, whom I detested on the score of his own merits.

As I entered the front parlour on a mild autumn afternoon which I had spent in the garden, I found Miss O'Reilly entertaining him and another gentleman. Mr. Trim sat by the fire in his usual attitude: that is to say, with his hands benevolently resting on his knees, his little eyes peering about the room, and his capacious mouth good-naturedly open.

"Eh! little Daisy!" he said, in his warm husky voice, "and how are you, little Daisy, eh?"

He stretched out an arm—long, for so short a man—and attempted to seize on me for the kind purpose of bestowing a kiss; but I eluded his grasp, and took refuge behind Miss O'Reilly's chair, whence I looked at him rather ungraciously. Mr. Trim took this as an excellent joke, threw himself back in his chair, shut his little eyes, opened his mouth wider, and gave utterance to a boisterous "Ha! ha!" that ended all at once in a

strange sort of squeak. Miss O'Reilly frowned; she never heard that laugh with patience.

"Daisy," she said, "go and shake hands with Mr. Smalley, an old friend of Cornelius."

I was shy, but that name had a spell; I obeyed it at once. Morton Smalley was a pale, slender, and good-looking young clergyman, with a stoop, and a long neck; he seemed amiable, and might be said to look meekly into the world through a pair of gold spectacles and over an immaculate white neckcloth. He sat on the edge of his chair, nervously holding his hat; yet when I went up to him, he held out his hand with a smile so kind, and looked at me so benignantly through his glasses, that my shyness vanished at once.

"That Smalley always was a lucky fellow with the ladies," ejaculated Mr. Trim, once more peering round the room with his hands on his knees.

Mr. Smalley blushed rosy red at the imputation.

"A very wild fellow he used to be, I assure you, Ma'am,—ha! ha!"

"My dear Trim," nervously began Mr. Smalley.

"Now, don't Smalley," deprecatingly interrupted Leopold Trim,—"don't be severe; you always are so confoundedly severe."

"Not in an unchristian manner, I hope," observed Mr. Smalley, looking uncomfortable.

"As if *I* meant any harm!" continued Mr. Trim, looking low-spirited; "as if any one minded the jokes of a good-natured fellow like *me!*"

Mr. Smalley looked remorseful.

"Don't be afraid of me, my dear," he said to me, "I am very fond of little girls."

"Oh! I am not afraid," I replied, confidently; for he did not look as if he could hurt a fly.

Mr. Smalley brightened, and began questioning me; I answered readily. He looked surprised and said—

"You are really very well informed, my dear."

"It is Cornelius who teaches me," I replied proudly.

"Then my wonder ceases. We were all proud of your brother, Ma'am," observed Mr. Smalley, addressing Kate, "and grateful—"

"For fighting all your battles—eh, Smalley?" kindly interrupted Mr. Trim.

Mr. Smalley coloured, but subdued the carnal man, to answer meekly—

"I objected on principle to the unchristian encounters which take place amongst boys, and I certainly owed much to the superior physical strength of our valued friend."

"Lord, Smalley! how touchy you are!" exclaimed Mr. Trim, with mournful surprise.

"Not in this case, surely," Mr. Smalley anxiously replied; "how could I take your remarks unkindly, when you know it was actually with you our dear friend had that first little affair—"

"It is very well for you, who looked on, to call it a little affair," rather sharply interrupted Mr. Trim, "but I never got such a drubbing."

Kate laughed gaily. Mr. Smalley, finding he had unconsciously been sarcastic, looked confounded, and tried to get out of it by suddenly finding out that when Miss O'Reilly laughed she was very like her brother. But Mr. Trim was on him directly. He, as every one knew, was as blind as a bat; but how did it happen that Smalley, who wore glasses, and pretended to have weak eyes, could yet see well enough to discover likenesses? He put the question with an air of injured candour. Mr. Smalley protested that his eyes were weak; but Mr. Trim proved to him so clearly that he was physically and mentally as sharp-eyed as a lynx, that his friend gave in, a convicted impostor, and took refuge in the Dorsetshire curacy to which he was proceeding, and of which he gave an account that might have answered for a bishopric. But thither too, Mr. Trim pursued him, and broadly hinted at the selfishness of some people, who could think of nothing but

that which concerned them. Upon which Mr. Smalley, looking at Kate, declared in self-defence that it was not through indifference, but from a sense of discretion, he had not inquired in what branch of literature, science, or art, her brother was now distinguishing himself. Miss O'Reilly reddened, and looked indignantly at Mr. Trim, who, with his eyes shut and his hands on his knees, had suddenly dropped into a dose by the fire-side. Then she drew up her slender figure, and said stiffly—

"My brother is a clerk, Sir."

Mr. Smalley looked at her with mute and incredulous surprise.

"Don't you remember I told you?" observed Mr. Trim, wakening up; "we were turning the corner of Oxford-street."

Mr. Smalley remembered turning the corner of Oxford-street, but no more.

"Yes, yes," confidently resumed Mr. Trim, "we were turning the corner of Oxford-street, when I said to you, 'Is it not a shame a scholar, a genius like O'Reilly, should be perched up on a high stool in a dirty hole of an office—'"

"It was his own choice," interrupted Kate, and she began speaking of the weather.

Five struck; I stole out of the room, went to

the garden, and opening the door, stood on the threshold to watch for Cornelius. I soon saw him, and ran out to meet him.

"Mr. Trim is come," I said.

"Is he?" was the careless reply.

"And Mr. Smalley, too."

Cornelius uttered a joyful exclamation, and hastened in, leaving me the door to close. The greeting of the two friends was not over when I entered the parlour. They stood in a proximity that rendered more apparent Mr. Smalley's feminine slenderness as contrasted with the erect and decided bearing of Cornelius, who, although much younger, had, as if by the intuitive remembrance of their old relation of protector and protected, laid his hand on the shoulder of his former schoolfellow, looking down at him with a pleased smile.

"Don't you think he's grown?" asked Mr. Trim.

"More than you," was the short reply.

"How much *you* are altered!" said Mr. Smalley, surveying his friend with evident admiration.

"And so are you," replied Cornelius, glancing at his clerical attire: "I congratulate you."

The Reverend Morton Smalley coloured a little, and, with a proud and happy smile, replied, gently squeezing the hand of Cornelius—

"Thank you, my dear friend; I have indeed obtained the privilege of entering our beloved Church—"

"Yes, yes," interrupted Mr. Trim, peering round, "Smalley always liked the ladies,—ha! ha!"

Mr. Smalley reddened and looked hurt, like a lover who hears his mistress slighted. Cornelius, who still stood with his hand on the shoulder of his friend, slowly turned towards Mr. Trim, to say, in a tone of ice—

"Did you speak, Trim?"

Mr. Trim opened his eyes with an alarmed start, as if he rather expected a sort of sequel to "the little affair" of their early days.

"Why, it is only a joke," he hastily replied; "I like a joke, you know; but who minds *me?*"

Before Cornelius could answer, Miss O'Reilly closed the discussion by ringing for tea. Mr. Trim, who now seemed gathered up into himself, like a snail in his shell, drank six cups in profound silence, then went back to the fireside, where, shutting his eyes, he indulged in a nap. Miss O'Reilly was as silent as a hostess could well be. I sat near her, unnoticed, but attentive.

Both during and after the meal the conversation was left to Cornelius and his friend. They

spoke of Mr. Smalley's prospects; of the Dorsetshire curacy, on which he again dwelt *con amore;* they talked of old times, laughed over old jokes, and exchanged information concerning old companions and schoolfellows, now scattered far and wide.

"What has become of Smith?" asked Cornelius.

"He is in the army."

"And Griffiths in the navy. You know that Blake is a physician, at Manchester?"

"Yes, and Reed has turned gentleman-farmer —is going to marry—"

"And lead a pastoral life. I am glad they are all doing well."

"Smalley!" observed Mr. Trim, wakening up, "tell O'Reilly you think it a shame for a fine fellow like him to poke in an office."

"*Et tu Brute!*" exclaimed Cornelius, turning round to Mr. Smalley, who replied, a little embarrassed—

"I confess I was surprised—"

"What did you expect from me?"

"Well, remembering your argumentative powers and flow of speech—"

"The law! Smalley, do you, a clergyman, advise me to set unfortunate people by the ears?"

Mr. Smalley looked startled, and took refuge in the healing art.

"The medical profession affords opportunities of benevolence—"

"And of being called up at two in the morning, to the relief of apoplectic gentlemen and ladies in distress."

"Shall I then suggest the army?"

"Would you advise me to make fighting a profession?"

"I fear the navy is open to the same objection," gently observed Mr. Smalley; but he suddenly brightened, laid one hand on the arm of Cornelius, and, raising the forefinger of the other, to impress on him the importance of the discovery, he said earnestly, "My dear friend, how odd it is that you should have forgotten the wide world of science, literature, and art, for which you are so wonderfully gifted!"

"Am I?" carelessly replied Cornelius. He sat on the hearth, facing the fire; he stooped, took up the poker, and began to drive in the coals, much in his sister's way.

"Why, you are a first-rate scholar."

"Learning is worthless now. Besides, cannot I enjoy my old authors without driving bargains out of them?"

"But science?"

"I have no patience for it; then it is hard work, and I am indolent."

"And literature?"

"Bid me become one of the builders of the Tower of Babel," hastily interrupted Cornelius. "No, Smalley, the office, with its paltry salary, moderate labour, and, heaven be praised for it, its absence from care, is the thing for me." He laid down the poker, and reclined back in his chair with careless indolence. Mr. Smalley slowly rubbed his forehead with his forefinger, and looked at Cornelius through his glasses and over his neck-cloth, with a gently puzzled air. Then he turned to Miss O'Reilly, and said simply—

"Your brother's philosophy puts me to shame, Ma'am: yet I used to think him ambitious, and I remember that once—I mean no reflection—one of the older boys having doubted his ability to—to do something or other—our dear friend being somewhat hasty, pushed him so that he fell."

"Say I knocked him down," replied Cornelius, reddening and trying to laugh. "Well, those days are gone, and with them the knocking-down propensity, as well as the ambition: I have become as meek and lowly as a lamb."

He threw back his head with the clear keen

look of a hawk, and a curl of the lip implying no great degree of meekness.

"Yes," quietly said Kate from her corner, "the child is not always father of the man."

Cornelius bit his lip; Mr. Trim, who was again napping, woke up with a Ha! ha! Then, standing up to look at the clock on the mantelpiece, asked Mr. Smalley "if he called this Christian conduct."

"You know," he added with feeling reproach, "that we have that appointment at seven with Jameson, that I am half blind, the most unfortunate fellow for dozing and forgetting, whilst you always have your wits about you, and are quite a telescope for seeing. Oh! Smalley!" He shook his head at him, peering around the room with eyes that looked smaller than ever. Mr. Smalley attempted a justification on the score of not remembering that the appointment had been made; but Leopold Trim hinted that it was too much to expect him to believe that; though, having been always more or less victimized and imposed upon by Smalley, he was getting used to it. Mr. Smalley expressed his penitence by rising at once, and this brought their visit to an abrupt close. The door was scarcely shut on them, when Miss O'Reilly, poking the fire with great vigour and vivacity, looked up at Cornelius and said—

"I don't believe in Trim; I don't believe in his voice; in his bark and whistle laugh; in his eyes or in his dozing: I don't believe in him at all."

"But Smalley?"

"He is a good young man," she replied impressively.

"Cornelius is a great deal better," I put in, quickly; "he fought for Mr. Smalley, who never fought for him."

"Did you ever hear such a conclusion!" exclaimed Miss O'Reilly, laying down the poker; "fighting made the test of excellence! You naughty girl! don't you see Mr. Smalley was a Christian lad, and Cornelius a young heathen?"

"I like the heathens," was my reply, more prompt than orthodox: "they were always brave; Achilles was, and so was Hector," I added, with a shy look at Cornelius, whom I had secretly identified with the Trojan hero.

Hector laughed, and told me to bring the books for the lessons. I remember that I answered him particularly well,—so well, that his sister asked if I was not progressing.

"Very much," he carelessly replied. "Kate, what has become of that 'Go where Glory waits thee'?"

"I really don't know. Child, what are you

about?" I was on my knees, hunting through the music, ardent and eager to find the piece he wanted. He allowed me to search, and sat down by his sister.

"Cornelius, here it is," I said, standing before him with the piece of music in my hand.

"Thank you, put it there. Kate, Smalley is smitten with you!"

"Nonsense, boy, go and sing your song."

He laughed; rose and kissed her blooming cheek. He had never so much as looked at me. Whilst he sang, I sat at the end of the piano as usual; when he closed the instrument and went to the sofa, I followed him and drew my stool at the foot of the couch. There he indolently lay for awhile; then suddenly started up, and walked, or rather lounged about the room, looking at the books on the table, at the flowers in the stand, and talking to his sister. I rose, and, unperceived as I thought, I followed him quietly; walking when he walked, stopping when he stopped, and waiting for the favourable moment to catch a look and obtain, perhaps, a negligent caress.

"It is most extraordinary," exclaimed Miss O'Reilly, who had been watching me.

"What is extraordinary, Kate?"

"How that child persists in sneaking after you,

as if she were a little spaniel and you were her master!"

"Is she not gone to bed yet?" asked Cornelius, turning round to give me a surprised look.

"She is going," replied Miss O'Reilly, rising and taking my hand: "early to bed and early to rise. By the bye, Cornelius, do try and get up earlier. It is too bad to keep breakfast as you do until near nine every morning, with the tea not worth drinking, and the ham getting cold with waiting."

She spoke with some solemnity. He laughed, and promised to amend, throwing the whole fault on "that dreadful indolence of his."

But he did not amend; for though the next morning was bright and sunny as an autumn morning can be, eight struck, and yet Cornelius did not come down, to the infinite detriment of tea and ham. This was but the repetition of a long-standing offence, until then patiently endured; but Miss O'Reilly now put by patience; she looked at the clock, gave the fire a good poke, and, knitting her smooth brow, exclaimed—

"I should like to know why it is that Cornelius will persist in getting up late!"

She was not addressing me; it was rather one of her peculiarities—and she had many—to soli-

loquize, and I was accustomed to it; but I now raised my eyes from the grammar I was studying, and, looking at her, I listened. She detected this.

"Did you ever see anything like it?" she emphatically observed, questioning that unknown individual with whom she often held a sort of interrogative discourse; "why, if that child were fast asleep, and you only whispered my brother's name, she would waken up directly. Oh! Midge, Midge!" She shook her head as though scarcely approving a feeling so exclusive, and gave the fire a slow meditative thrust. The clock, by striking half-past eight, roused her from her abstraction.

"Daisy," she said very seriously, "go and knock at the door of Cornelius, and tell him the hour." I obeyed; that is to say, I went upstairs; but I found the door standing wide open, and the room vacant, so I proceeded to the little study, thinking Cornelius might perhaps be there. I knocked at the door and received no answer; I knocked again with the same result. Then I perceived that the door was not quite shut, but stood ajar; I gently pushed it open and looked in. The little table was not in its usual place; it stood so as to receive the most favourable degree of light; before it sat Cornelius in a bending attitude, and, as I saw at a glance, drawing from one of the plaster casts.

## CHAPTER VIII.

So intent was Cornelius on his occupation that he never heard or saw me, until I observed, somewhat timidly, "Cornelius, Kate sent me up to tell you that it is half-past eight o'clock."

He looked up with a sudden start that nearly upset the table, and sharply exclaimed, "Why did you come in without knocking?"

"I knocked twice, Cornelius, but you did not answer."

"If you had knocked ten times, you had no right to open that door and enter this room."

"Cornelius, the door was open," I said very earnestly, for he looked quite vexed, with his face flushed, and his brow knit.

"Oh, was it?" he replied, smoothing down. He looked hastily at the drawing on the table, then

gave me a quick glance, read in my face that I had seen it, and, taking a sudden resolve, he said, "Come in, and shut the door."

I obeyed. When I stood by his side, Cornelius laid his hand on my head, and gazing very earnestly in my eyes, he said, "You look as if you could keep a secret. Do you know what a secret is?"

"Yes, Cornelius, I do."

"Then keep mine for me. You see I am drawing. I rise every morning with dawn, to draw; but I do not want Kate to know it just yet,—not until I have done something worth showing. This is the secret you will have to keep; do you understand?"

"Oh yes," I confidently answered.

"How will you manage?"

"I shall not tell her," was my prompt reply.

"Why, of course," he said, smiling; "but not to tell is only the first step in keeping a secret. The next, and far more difficult, is not to let it appear that there is a secret. This shall be the test of your discretion."

He removed every trace of his late occupation, and accompanied me downstairs. Miss O'Reilly was not in the parlour; but when she came in she gave her brother a good scolding, which he bore patiently. When he rose to go I handed him his

hat as usual; as he took it from my hand, he stooped, and whispered, "Remember!"

He was no sooner gone than Kate, turning to me, said, with a puzzled smile, "Daisy! what was it Cornelius whispered so mysteriously?"

I hung down my head.

"Did you hear me?"

"Yes, Kate."

"Then answer, child." Again I was mute. Kate laid down her work and beckoned me to her.

"Is it a secret?" she asked, gravely.

"I don't say it is, Kate," I replied eagerly.

"Then answer." I was obstinately silent.

"Will you tell me?" she asked, much incensed.

"No," I resolutely replied.

She rose in great wrath, and consigned me to the back-parlour for the rest of the day. Never did punishment sit so lightly on me. Towards dusk Miss O'Reilly opened the door, that I might not feel quite alone. Cornelius came home much later than usual; I sat in the dark, but I could see him; he had thrown himself down on the sofa; the light of the lamp fell full on his face; his look wandered around the room in search of me.

"She has been naughty," gravely said his sister; and she proceeded to relate my offence.

"She would not tell you?" he observed.

"No, indeed! I tried her again in the afternoon; but she stood before me, white with stubbornness, her lips quite closed, hanging down her head, and as mute as a stone."

"She is a peculiar child," quietly said Cornelius, and I could see his gaze seeking to pierce the gloom in which I lingered.

"Peculiar! you had better call it originality."

Cornelius laughed; and half raising himself up on one elbow, summoned me in with a "Come here, Daisy!" that quickly brought me to his side. He pushed back the hair from my forehead, looked into my face, and said, gravely, "She looks stubborn; I see it in her eyes, and yet what wonderfully fine eyes they are, Kate!"

"Eyes, indeed!" was her indignant rejoinder. "Daisy, go back to your room."

I turned away to obey, but Cornelius called me back.

"Let me try my power," he said to his sister; then to me, "Daisy, tell Kate what I whispered to you."

"Remember!" was my ready reply.

"How can you call her stubborn?" asked Cornelius.

"Remember—what?" inquired Kate; "there, do you see how she won't answer?"

"You obstinate child!" said Cornelius, smiling, "don't you see I mean you to speak? Say all; tell Kate why I bade you remember."

"I was not to tell you that I had found him drawing," I said, turning to Miss O'Reilly.

Her work dropped on her knees; she turned very pale; her look, keen and troubled, at once sought the calm face of her brother, who had again sunk in his indolent attitude, with his hand carelessly smoothing my hair. Miss O'Reilly tried to look composed, and observed, in a voice which all her efforts could not prevent from being tremulous and low, "Oh! you were drawing, Cornelius, were you?"

"Yes," he carelessly replied, "it amuses me in the morning."

"Oh, it amuses you very much, Cornelius?"

"Why, yes."

She took up her work; laid it down, rose, went up to her brother, and standing before him said, resolutely, "Cornelius, tell me the truth."

He sat up, and making her sit down by him, he calmly observed, "Why do you look so frightened, Kate?"

"The truth!" she exclaimed, almost passionately, "the truth!"

"You have had it."

"What does that morning drawing mean?"

"You know it."

"You mean to become an artist?"

"I am an artist," he replied, drawing himself up slightly.

She rocked herself to and fro, looking at her brother drearily. He laid his hand on her shoulder, and said, with earnest tone and look—

"Kate, I know all you dread; there are obstacles; I see them, and I will conquer them. Obstacles! why if there were none, would anything in this world be worth the winning?"

He had begun calmly; he ended with strange warmth and vehemence, throwing back his head with the presumptuous, but not ungraceful confidence of youth. His look was daring, his smile full of trust; to both his sister responded by a mournful glance dimmed with tears.

"You had promised—" she began.

"Not to give it up for ever, Kate," he interrupted; "I have kept my promise, I have tried not to draw; I might as well try not to breathe."

"I know now why you took that paltry situation; you did not mean to stop there."

"No, indeed, Kate."

"I always knew you were ambitious."

"So I am."

"A nice mistress Fame will make you, my poor brother! Oh yes, very!"

"I won't make a mistress of her, Kate; she is too much used to that; she shall be my handmaiden."

"First catch her!" shortly replied his sister.

He laughed good-humouredly; she gave a deep, impatient sigh.

"I know I must seem harsh," she said, "but our father's death—of a broken heart—is always before me. You are very like him in person and temper; for God's sake be not like him in destiny! I know painting; once it has taken hold of a man's mind, soul and being, he must either win or perish. Love is nothing to it. I would rather see you in love with ten girls."

"At a time?" interrupted Cornelius, looking shocked. "Am I a Turk?"

"You foolish boy, is a Turk ever in love? I mean I would rather see you wasting, in successive follies, the best years of your youth, than see you a painter. There comes a time, when, of his own accord, a man gives up passion; but when does the unlucky wight who has once begun to write poetry or paint pictures give them up?"

"Never, unless he never loved them," replied Cornelius, with a triumphant smile; "poetry or

painting, which I hold to be far higher, become part of a man's being, and follow him to the grave. But it is desecration to speak of it as a human passion. I am not hard-hearted; but if Venus in all her charms, or, to use a stronger figure of speech, if one of Raffaelle's divine women were to become flesh and blood for my sake, and implore me to return her passion—"

"Why you would of course; don't make yourself out more flinty than you are; it would not take one of Raffaelle's women to do that either."

"Hear me out: if to win this lovely creature I should give up painting, not for ever, not for ten years, nor yet five, but just for one year,—Kate, she might walk back to her canvas."

"Conceited fellow!" indignantly said Kate, divided between vexation at his predilection for Art, and the slight thrown on her sex.

"It is not conceit, Kate; it is the superior attraction of Art over passion. How is it you do not see there is and can be nothing like painting pictures?" Kate groaned. "It beats all else hollow, —poetry, music, ambition, war, and love, which is held master of all. Alexander, unhappy man! wept because he had no more worlds to win. Did Apelles ever weep for having no more pictures to paint? Paris carried off Helen to Troy, which

was taken after a ten years' siege. Imagine Paris an artist; he paints Helen under a variety of attitudes: Menelaus benevolently looking on; little Hermione plays near her mamma; Troy stands in the distance, with Priam on the walls; everything peace and harmony.—Moral: if fine gentlemen would take the portraits, and not the persons of fair ladies, we should not hear so much of invaded hearths and affairs of honour."

"Will you talk seriously?" impatiently said Kate.

"As seriously as you can wish," he replied gravely. "What do you fear for me? It is late to begin, but I have been working hard these two years. What about our poor father? many a great painter has been the son of a disappointed artist. What even about the difficulty of winning fame? I am ambitious, not so much to be famous, as to do great things. There is the aim of a life; there is the glorious victory to win."

His handsome face had never looked half so handsome: it expressed daring, power, hope, ardour, all that subdues the future to a man's will.

"I tell you," he resumed, with a short triumphant laugh, "that I shall succeed. I feel the power within me; I shall give fame to the name of O'Reilly, stuff your pockets with money, charm

your eyes with fair forms; in short I shall conquer Art."

He passed his arm around his sister's neck, and gave her a warm kiss. She half smiled.

"That always was the way," she said, with a sigh: "I argued; you talked me out of my better knowledge, and then you would put your arm around my neck, and—"

"There was no resisting that, Kate; but then I looked up, and now I look down."

"Yes, you are a man now," she replied, looking at him with an admiring smile, "and the O'Reillys have always been fine men."

"And the women lovely, gifted, admired—"

"And minded as much as the whistling of the wind. Don't look vexed, my poor boy. I know I am not fair to you; that many a son is not so good and dutiful to his mother as you are to me; but, you see, it is as if you had been marrying a girl I hated; I can't get over it, even though I feel you have a right to please yourself. The best course will be not to talk of it: we should not agree; and where's the use of disagreeing?"

"If wives were as sensible as you are—"

"Nonsense!" she interrupted, smiling; "no woman of spirit would give in to her husband; but to her boy! oh, that's very different. Please your-

self; paint your pictures, my darling, only—only—if the public don't like them, don't break your heart."

She now stood by him, with her hand resting lightly on his fine dark hair, and her eyes seeking his with wistful fondness. He laughed at her last words, laughed and knit his brow as he said—

"The public may break its heart about me, Kate,—not that I wish it such a fate, poor thing!—but against the reverse I protest. And now have mercy on your brother, who has heard something about Daisy, and a good deal about painting, but nothing about tea."

"Are you hungry?"

"Starving."

"Poor fellow! I had no idea of it,—I shall see to it myself."

She left the room. Her brother remained sitting in the same attitude, a little bent forward, abstractedly gazing at the fire. Then all at once he saw and noticed me, as I sat apart quiet and silent. He beckoned; I approached.

"What shall I give you?" he asked.

"Nothing," was my laconic reply.

"But I want to give you something."

I hated the idea of being paid for my secresy and my punishment. I felt myself reddening as I answered—

"But I don't want anything, Cornelius."

"Don't you?" he replied, smiling, and before I knew what he was about, I found myself on the knee and in the arms of Cornelius, who was kissing me merrily. He had never done half as much since I was with him and his sister. My face burned with surprise and delight; he laughed, kissed me again, and said, with the secure smile of conscious power, "Well, what am I to give you?"

I was completely subdued; I replied, submissively, "Anything you like, Cornelius."

"No, it must be anything you like, and in my power to give. A book, a plaything, a doll, etc."

"Anything! may I really ask for anything?" I exclaimed, with sudden animation.

"Yes, you may."

"Do you really mean it?"

"I always mean what I say. Why, child, what can it be? Your eyes sparkle and your cheeks flush. What is it? Speak out."

"Let me be with you in the morning when you are drawing."

"Is that it?" he said, looking annoyed and surprised.

"Yes, Cornelius."

"You will have to stay very quiet."

"I don't mind that, Cornelius."

"You must not speak."

"I don't mind that either."

"Have something else: a book with pictures."

I did not answer.

"And I will let you come in now and then."

I remained mute. Cornelius saw that what I had asked for, and nothing else, I would have. Again he warned me.

"Daisy, you will find it very dull to sit without speaking or moving. I pity you, my poor child."

I was shrewd enough to see through his pity. I looked up into his face, and said demurely—

"I shall not mind it, Cornelius."

"You will mind nothing to have your way —obstinate little thing!—but I warn you: you must come in without knocking, without saying good morning; you must not move, speak, or go in and out: if you break the agreement once, you lose the privilege for ever."

"I shall not break the agreement, Cornelius."

"Of course you won't," he said, looking both provoked and amused, "catch me again passing my word to you, Miss Burns."

I half feared he was vexed, but he was not, for when Deborah brought in the tea-tray, with the addition of fried ham and eggs, Cornelius, instead of putting me away, kept me on his knee.

"The O'Reillys always had good appetites," observed Miss O'Reilly, who stood looking on, enjoying the vigour with which her brother attacked her goodcheer. "Daisy, what are you perched up there for? Come down directly."

"Stay, Daisy," said Cornelius, "you are not in my way." And indeed, from the fashion in which everything vanished before him, I do not think I was. But Miss O'Reilly was of a different opinion, for she resumed, impatiently—

"Now, Cornelius, you need not feed that child from your plate; she left half her own tea, and she drinks yours, because it is yours."

Cornelius was holding his cup to my lips. He smiled, and kissed me.

"Yes, pet her now," said Kate, "after getting her unjustly punished."

"It was thoughtless of me—I beg her pardon."

"I don't want you to beg my pardon," I replied, looking a little indignantly at his sister.

"I think if he were to beat you, you would enjoy it," was her short answer.

His meal was over; he had removed from the table to the sofa; but he had not put me away. Miss O'Reilly looked at us from her place, and evidently could not make it out.

"Are there to be no lessons?" she asked at length.

"No; this is a holiday."

"Shall there be no singing?"

"I am tired."

He was not too tired to talk to me, and make me talk, to an extent that induced Miss O'Reilly to exclaim—

"I thought the child was a mouse, and she turns out to be a magpie."

She spoke shortly, but he kept me still.

"Decidedly," said Kate, after vainly waiting for me to be put away, "decidedly, if one were to meet you in China or Japan, that little pale face would be somewhere about you."

He said it was a little pale face, but that it had fine eyes, and he caressed her who owned it, very kindly.

"Nonsense!" observed his sister, frowning.

"She is so shy," he pleaded.

"Pretty shyness, indeed!" replied Kate, as she saw me, with the sudden familiarity of childhood, pass my arm around the neck of her brother, and rest my head on his shoulder. "Daisy, it is bed-time."

She rose, but I could not bear to leave Cornelius on the first evening of his kindness. I clasped my two hands around his neck, and looked beseechingly in his face.

"Another quarter of an hour, Kate," he said.

"Not another minute," she replied, taking my hand, for I lingered in his embrace like our mother Eve in Eden. "If you are good," she added, to comfort me, "you shall stay up half an hour longer as the days increase."

"But they are shortening now," I said, mournfully.

"Let her stay up for this one evening," entreated Cornelius, "to make up for her dull day in the back-parlour."

Miss O'Reilly allowed herself to be mollified; but as she returned to her place and sat down, she said emphatically, looking at the fire—

"He will spoil that child, you'll see he will."

Cornelius only smiled; he did not attempt to contradict the prophecy by putting me away; as long as I liked, he allowed me to remain thus—once more an indulged and very happy child.

From that evening Cornelius liked me. By making him all to me, I had succeeded in becoming something to him; for there is this mysterious beauty in love, that it wins love; unlike other prodigals, it is in the very excess of its bounty that it finds a return.

## CHAPTER IX.

EARLY the next morning I stole up to the study. I did not knock; I entered on tiptoe; I closed the door softly; I did not bid Cornelius good morning; but I brought forward a high stool, placed it so that it commanded a good view of him and of his drawing, and, with some trouble, I clambered up to its summit: once there, I moved no more, but watched him with intense interest.

He neither moved nor looked up; his task absorbed every faculty of his being; he looked breathless; every feature expressed the concentration of his mind and senses towards one point. For an hour he never stirred; at length he pushed away his drawing, threw himself back in his chair, and, having been up since dawn, indulged in a very unromantic yawn. I sat rather behind him; it was

some time before he remembered me; he then suddenly turned round, and looked at me in profound silence. I was too much on my guard to infringe the agreement by either moving or opening my lips.

"You have a good eye for a position," he said.

I did not answer.

"Are you comfortable, perched up there?" he continued.

"I don't mind it, Cornelius."

"You can come down now."

I obeyed with great alacrity.

"May I speak now?" I asked with a questioning look.

"You may ease yourself a little," was his charitable reply.

"Cornelius, is not that Juno?"

"The wife of Jupiter and the mamma of Vulcan —precisely."

I was standing by him. There were other drawings on the table; I raised the corner of one and glanced at Cornelius; he smiled assent. I drew it forth; it represented an Italian boy sitting on sunlit stone steps.

"That is the boy to whom Kate gave the piece of bread the other morning," I exclaimed eagerly, "is it not, Cornelius?"

I looked up into his face; he seemed charmed: first praise is like early dew, very fresh and very sweet. He drew forth another drawing, and asked whose face it was. Breathless with astonishment, I recognized myself; then Kate, Deborah, Miss Hart, and even Mr. Trim, passed before me in graphic sketches. I felt excited; I now knew the power of Cornelius: he had actually, if not created, yet drawn from obscurity, those forms and faces by the mere force of his will.

"Why, how flushed and animated you look!" said Cornelius, with an amused smile, as he put away the drawings.

"Cornelius," I said eagerly.

"Daisy."

"Don't you think that if you like—" I paused: he was not attending to me.

"I hear you," he observed, stooping to pick up a stray drawing,—"don't I think that if I like—"

"Don't you think that if you like you may become as great a painter as Raffaelle or Michael Angelo?"

I spoke seriously and waited for his reply, as if it were to decide the question. Cornelius looked at me with his drawing in his hand; he tried to laugh, but only reddened violently.

"You ambitious little thing!" he said, "what

has put Raffaelle or Michael Angelo into your head?"

"Papa told me they were the two greatest painters, but I don't see why you should not be as great as either of them."

"One can be great and yet be unlike them,—ay, and be famous too!"

"Will you be famous?"

"Who was it never bade me good morning?" asked Cornelius, kissing me.

But in the very midst of the caress, as his lips touched my cheek, I repeated my question, with the unconquerable persistency of children:

"Will you be famous?"

"Would you like it?" he asked, smiling.

"Oh! so much!" I exclaimed, with my whole heart.

"Then on my word, my dear, I shall do my best to please you; and now let us go down to breakfast."

He was unusually late, but his sister did not complain. She received him with pleasant cheerfulness; yet several times, in the course of that day, I overheard her sighing to herself very sadly.

I have since then wondered at the secretiveness of Cornelius; but though he was religious, he never spoke of religion; he rarely alluded to his country, for which he could do nothing, whose wrongs he

resented too proudly to lament, and yet which he carried in his heart; and, perhaps because he loved it so ardently, he had never made painting the subject of daily speech. When it became the avowed occupation of his life—a task instead of a feeling—this reserve lessened; something of it remained with his sister; little, I might almost say nothing, with me.

I was a child, but I gave him sympathy, a food which the strongest hearts have needed. I loved him, I admired him, I believed in him; he soon liked to have me in his study, or studio, as by a convenient change of the vowels it was now called. He could talk to me, amuse himself with my criticisms, then with a look consign me to silence. Perhaps it was thus he became so fond of me,—too fond, his sister said; all I know is, he was very kind and the winter a very happy time.

The spring that followed it was lovely. One day I remember especially for its joyous brightness. The garden was green and blooming; Kate sat sewing on the bench by the house; I stood at the door looking down the lane. The hawthorn hedge that faced the west was ready to break out in blossom; the sun was warm; the air clear; the south-western wind was gently blowing; the newly leaved trees seemed rejoicing in a second birth; afar, through

the stillness of this quiet place, the cuckoo's voice was faintly heard. I know not why I record these things, save that there is a portion of our hearts to which the aspects of this lovely world ever cling, and that, as I stood there looking, Cornelius came up the lane. He had gathered the ripest hawthorn bough; he gave it to me smiling; entered and sat down on the bench by his sister: I sat on the step at their feet. For awhile they talked of indifferent things, then he said—

"Kate, will you sit to me?"

"What for?" she asked, looking rather startled.

"A little oil painting: subject, Mother and child. You are to be the mamma, Daisy the child."

"Where will you send it?"

"To the Academy, of course. Can you give me early sittings?"

"I can; but can Daisy?"

I saw his face express keen disappointment, and I said eagerly—

"I shall get up early, Cornelius; with dawn; I shall not mind a bit."

"Nonsense, you shall get up at your usual hour —and there's an end of it."

"Cornelius, may I speak to you?"

"No:" he started up, walked across the garden, came back and threw himself down, exclaiming—

"It will never be finished, never!"

"Cornelius," I said again, "let me speak to you *now*."

"Speak, and have done with it," he said, impatiently.

"If I go to bed early, may I not get up early? Early to bed and early to rise, you know."

He bent on me a face that lit with sudden gladness.

"And will you really do that for me?" he asked, eagerly. "Will you, who hate going to bed early, do that for my sake?"

"Oh yes, Cornelius, and be so glad to help you a little!"

"God bless you, my good little girl!" cried Cornelius, as he caught me up in his arms, and accompanied the benediction with a warm kiss, "I shall never forget that, never!"

He looked touched and delighted. He who had heaped so many kindnesses on me, was as quick to feel this little proof of my grateful affection, as though he had done nothing to call it forth.

"Now, is not that good of her?" he said to Kate, to offer to go to bed early just as she is beginning to stay up that half-hour later? Is it not good of her?"

"She shall be put to the test this very evening," replied Kate, smiling.

I stood the test with a heroism only to be equalled by my patience as a sitter on the following morning. I was as submissive as Kate was rebellious.

"Kate," once remonstrated her brother, "will you do nothing for Art,—not even to sit quietly?"

"Nonsense!" she impatiently replied.

"Nonsense!" he mournfully echoed, "she calls Art nonsense! Art, that is to win her brother so much honour, ay, and with this very picture!"

Kate sighed deeply.

"How very odd," said Cornelius, pausing in his work to look at her,—"how very odd you do not see what is so clear to me, that I must succeed! I am surprised you do not see it, Kate."

There was not the shadow of a doubt on his clear brow; not a sign of fear in his secure and ardent look.

"Our poor father used to say just the same, Cornelius, only if one doubted, he would fly out."

"Then I do not; there is the difference."

"He was not bad-tempered; but disappointment—"

"Kate, your manner of supporting Daisy is getting less and less maternal; pray do not forget that

you are very miserable about your darling. Daisy, my pet, your doll was put there to show you are too ill to enjoy it, not to look at."

The sitting was long; our attitudes were rather fatiguing; Kate lost patience.

"You will be late," she said, "and Daisy is tired."

"I am not tired," I observed.

"Don't you know, Kate," said her brother, smiling, "that if I were to ask her to jump out of that window, she would?"

"Nonsense!" shortly replied Miss O'Reilly.

"There," she added, as I reddened indignantly at what I considered an imputation on my devotedness,—"there, did you see the look the little minx gave me?"

"I see that, as my attitudes are spoiled, I release you. Ah, Daisy is the best sitter of the two," he added, as his sister jumped up with great alacrity; and he thanked me with a caress so kind, that Kate said, in a displeased tone—

"You may make that child too fond of you, Cornelius."

"And if I do, Kate, have I not the antidote? Am I not getting very fond of her myself?"

He was, and I knew it; and daily rejoiced in the blessed consciousness.

Spring yielded to summer; summer passed; the picture progressed; Cornelius devoted to it his brief holiday in the autumn.

"You look pale and ill," said Kate; "you want rest."

"I feel in perfect health; work is my holiday," was his invariable reply.

And to work he fell—harder than ever.

"Yes, yes," she sadly said, "the fever is on you."

The fever was indeed on him; that strange, engrossing fever to which passion is nothing; which to the strong is life, but death to the weak. He revelled in it as in a new, free, delightful existence. Pale and thin he was, but his brow had never been more serene, his glance more hopeful, his whole bearing more living and energetic. But as autumn waned, as days grew short, as leisure to work lessened, the serenity of Cornelius vanished. He rose long before dawn and paced his little studio up and down, impatiently watching the east; with the first streak of daylight he was at work, and day after day it became more difficult to tear him from his task. When he came home at dusk, his first act was to run up to his picture. I often followed him unnoticed, and found him standing before it, fastening on his unfinished labour a con-

centrated look that seemed as if it would struggle against fate and annihilate the laws of time. When he turned away, it was with an impatient sigh unmixed with the least atom of resignation.

We were sitting dull enough in the parlour, one evening just before Christmas, when Kate said to him, in her sudden way—

"The days will get long in January."

"And I shall then be a free man," he replied, with a smile.

"You have been discharged!" she exclaimed, dismayed.

"I have discharged myself. Now, Kate, don't look so startled! The picture shall be finished in time."

"I dare say it will, Cornelius," she replied, ruefully.

"Well, then, what do you fear?"

"Suppose," she hesitatingly suggested, "that it cannot get exhibited!"

"I do not see how that can be," composedly replied Cornelius.

"Bless the boy! do they never reject pictures?"

I sat by Cornelius, whose hand played idly with my hair; he stopped short to give his sister an astonished glance, then he shook his handsome head, and laughed gaily.

"Reject *that* picture, Kate!"

"He is his father all over," she sighed.

He smiled at her blindness, and turning to me, said—

"What do you say, Daisy?"

"They shan't reject it; they dare not," was my ready reply.

"It is too absurd to suppose such a thing, is it not?" he added, to teaze his sister, who disappointed him by unexpectedly veering round.

"Cornelius," she said decisively, "your energy and decision in this matter give me more hope than your enthusiasm. I like a man to act for himself; but you must go on as you have begun, and give yourself up entirely. Will you be a student at the Royal Academy? Will you study under some great master? Will you travel? Speak, I have money."

"Thank you, Kate; I am glad you think I have acted rightly; but I have begun alone, and alone I must go on. with experience for my sole teacher. I must keep my originality."

Kate remonstrated, but Cornelius, once in the fortification of his originality, was not to be ejected thence.

"Just like his poor father!" sighed Kate; "he was always for his originality."

Cornelius also resembled his poor father in the possession of a will of his own. Kate knew it, and wisely gave up the point.

In a few days more Cornelius was free. His tread about the house had another sound; his eyes overflowed with gladness and burned with the hope of coming triumphs. He exulted in the endless sittings we gave him, and amused himself like a child with day-dreams and air-castles. His favourite one—the fame and fortune were both settled—was a skylight.

"Yes, Kate," he once said, looking up at the ceiling, "to keep your brother under your roof, you must knock it down and give him a skylight. Some artists prefer studios in town; but I, domestic man, stick to the household gods: with a skylight you may keep me for ever."

"Conceited fellow!"

"Conceited! now is not this a nice bit of painting?" he drew her to his side and made her face the easel.

"Indeed it is," she replied admiringly: "where will you send it?"

"To the Academy, Kate, the first place or none."

"Oh!" she hastened to answer, "I only fear they may not hang it as well as it deserves. Jealousy, you know, or even want of room."

"There is always room for the really good pictures," replied Cornelius.

This was in February, but his sister evidently felt some uneasiness on the subject, for she recurred to it several times, and when nothing led to the remark, observed to Cornelius with a wistful look—

"I hope it may be well hung, Cornelius."

"I hope so," he quietly replied.

At length came the day on which this interesting fact was to be ascertained. A bright May day it was; Cornelius wished to go alone, "there always was such a crowd on the first day," and had his wish. We stayed at home trying to seem very careless, very indifferent, but Miss O'Reilly could not work and I could not study. We began sudden conversations on common-place themes, that broke off as they had commenced, at once and without cause. Of the real subject that occupied our thoughts we never spoke. I went up and down the house with unusual restlessness, ever coming back to the window that overlooked the Grove.

"I should like to know what you mean by it?" suddenly asked Miss O'Reilly. "Why do you look out of that window?"

"Cornelius told me he would come by the Grove."

"And why do you fidget about his coming back

on this particular day? Just get out of my light, if you please."

I obeyed; but the next thing Kate did herself was to open the window and look down the Grove. The day was waning; Cornelius did not return; she could not keep in, but said anxiously—

"I am afraid it is not well hung, after all."

"I am afraid it is not," I replied, for I too began to feel very uncomfortable.

"No, decidedly it is not well hung," she continued, "but I don't see why that should prevent him from coming back;" and no longer caring to hide her impatience, she took her seat at the window, which she left no more.

"There is Cornelius!" I said with a start, as a ring was heard at the garden-door.

"Hold your tongue!" indignantly exclaimed Kate. "Why should he slink in by the back way? Daisy, I forbid you to open: it is a run-away ring: Cornelius indeed!"

I obeyed reluctantly; I was sure it was Cornelius, and as I had not been forbidden to look, I went to the back-parlour window. I reached it as Deborah opened the door. It was Cornelius, with his hat pulled down over his brow, and what could be seen of his face, of a dull leaden white. He passed by the girl without uttering a word, entered

the house, and went upstairs at once. I heard him locking himself up in his room, then all was still.

I returned to the front parlour. Miss O'Reilly was pacing it up and down in great agitation, wringing her hands and uttering many broken ejaculations of mingled grief and anger.

"My poor boy! my poor boy!" she exclaimed, with a strange mixture of pathos and tenderness in her voice, like a mother lamenting over her child; then stopping short, she added, her brown eyes kindling with sudden and rapid wrath—"What a bad set they are! a bad envious set! They thought they would not let him get up and eclipse them all. Oh no!—not they—they knew better than that—crush him at once—don't give him time—crush him at once!"

She laughed sarcastically, than resumed, in a tone of indignant and dignified wonder, "I am astonished at Cornelius. What else could he expect? Has he not genius, and is he not an Irishman? Why did he not put Samuel Smith or John Jenkins or Leopold Trim at the bottom of his picture?—it would have got in at once; but with such a name as Cornelius O'Reilly, it was ludicrous to expect it."

"Don't they take in the pictures of Irish artists?" I asked.

"Hold your tongue!" was the short reply I got.

"Please, Ma'am," said Deborah, opening the door, "dont you want the tea?"

"And why should we not want the tea?" asked Miss O'Reilly, giving her a suspicious look,—"can you tell me why, Deborah? Can you give me any reason?—I should like to know why?"

Deborah opened her mouth in mute wonder.

"Bring up the tea-tray," continued her mistress, "and henceforth don't be uppish and make remarks, for you see it won't go down with me."

Deborah endured the reproof with a perplexed air, retired, and returned with the tray. Miss O'Reilly made the tea with a deep sigh. We had eaten little at dinner; but had Cornelius dined at all? He gave us no sign of existence, and Kate did not seem inclined to go near him. When the tea was poured out, she turned to me and said, in a low tone—

"Go and tell Cornelius tea is ready."

I obeyed in silence.

## CHAPTER X.

I KNOCKED at the door of Cornelius; he opened it; the landing was dark, I could not see him distinctly. I delivered my message; he did not reply, but quietly followed me downstairs. As he entered the parlour, the look of Kate became riveted on his face; it was pale but perfectly collected. He sat down and drank his tea in total silence. No sooner was the tray removed, than Miss O'Reilly entered abruptly on the subject, by saying—

"What mean jealousy there is, Cornelius!"

"Yes, Kate, very mean jealousy."

"In this case especially."

"It was not jealousy," he replied, looking annoyed.

"The name then! I said so: a Smith, a Jones, a Jenkins would have got in, but an O'Reilly—"

"Kate," interrupted her brother, reddening, "it was not the name."

"What then?" she asked, with a wistful look.

His lip trembled, but he made an effort, and replied firmly—

"The picture."

"The picture!" echoed Kate, looking disheartened.

"Yes, the picture," resumed Cornelius, inexorable to himself, to his youthful ambition, to his long-cherished dreams; "it is not its being rejected that troubles me, but its having deserved the rejection. Kate, I have committed a bitter mistake, and I found it out, not today, but weeks ago. So long as Art was unattempted, faith was in me as a living stream; it has ebbed away, and left the bed where it once flowed, barren and dry."

He sat by the table, his brow resting on his hand, the light of the lamp falling on his pale face, where will vainly sought to control the keen disappointment of a life-long aim. There was a pause, then his sister said—

"What will you do?"

"Seek for some other situation; anything will do."

"The City again! Why not try for work as an artist?"

"And do as a drudge the work I so long hoped to do as a master," replied Cornelius, colouring to the very temples. "No, Kate, that indeed would be degradation!"

"Then you give up painting?"

"Utterly."

She started from her seat, went up to him, laid her hand on his arm, and said warmly—

"Leave the City to drudges, and painting to enthusiasts. You have youth, talent, energy; choose the career of a gentleman, work, and make your way as you can, if you will—I shall find the means."

"I cannot," replied Cornelius, after a pause.

"Then you mean to return to painting," vehemently exclaimed his sister.

"If I cannot paint good pictures, Kate, I will not paint bad ones."

"What will you do?"

"The City—"

"The City! the dirty, smoky City for an Irish gentleman, of pure Milesian blood, without Scotch or Saxon stain, and who calls himself O'Reilly too! Cornelius, return to painting rather."

"Kate," he replied, with an expression of pain and weariness, "this is not a matter of will; I cannot paint now; my faith is dead. You may lock up the studio; the easel may stand against

the wall; pencil or palette your brother will never handle again."

"Nor shall my brother be a clerk," she said resolutely.

Cornelius knit his brow and looked obstinate.

"But why?" she exclaimed impatiently; "will you just tell me why?"

"You ask!" he replied, tossing on the couch, where he had again thrown himself with listless indolence.

"Ay, and I want to know, too, Cornelius," she said, quietly returning to her chair.

"Kate, when James could not marry his cousin, a plain, silly girl, why did he go to London Bridge and jump over?"

Miss O'Reilly jumped on her chair.

"Nonsense!" she cried, reddening, "you are not going to take that leap because you cannot paint pictures!"

"No, but I'll do like James. I cannot have the girl I like—I'll have no other. I cannot marry painting, a maid as fair as May, as rosy as June, fresh as an eternal spring; and you think, Kate," he added, quite indignantly, "you actually think I would wed surly law, ill-favoured medicine, or any of those old ladies whom men woo for their money—no, 'faith!"

He spoke resolutely, and sank back in his old attitude with great decision.

"James was a fool!" hastily said Kate.

"He was; and though there is no girl can compare with painting; though the love about which so much has been sung is cold and tame compared to the passion which fills a true painter's heart, I am not going to drown myself because the glorious gift has been denied me, and I cannot be that man."

He laughed rather drearily as he said it.

"Yes, but you will do nothing else," replied Kate.

"I can put my heart to nothing else. Daisy, why do you not bring the books as usual?"

I obeyed, but I could not give my attention to the lessons.

"Child," impatiently said Cornelius, "what can you be thinking of?"

I was thinking that he was not to be an artist; that he had given up painting, fame, and fortune; and, as he put the question, I burst into tears.

"I understand," quietly said Cornelius: "you do not know your lessons."

He closed the book, went to the piano, and sang as usual.

It was plain Cornelius rejected sympathy. He showed no pity to himself, and would accept none from others. If he suffered, the jealous pride of

youth would not let him confess it, yet we could see that he was not happy. He set about looking for another situation, with the dogged sort of satisfaction a man may find in choosing the rope with which he is to hang himself. His pleasant face contracted a bitter expression; his good-humoured smile became ironical and sarcastic; he had fits of the most dreary merriment; of pity he was so resentfully suspicious that we scarcely dared to look at him. Three weeks had thus elapsed, when, as I sat with Kate and Cornelius in the garden, I ventured, thinking him in a better mood than usual, to say, in my most insinuating accents—

"Cornelius, what will be the subject of your next picture?"

He turned round and gave me a look so stern that I drew back half frightened.

"How dare you be so presuming?" said Kate, indignantly.

I did not reply, but after a while I left them. I re-entered the house, and stole up to the studio, there to brood in peace over what it was now an offence to remember. The easel stood against the wall; the papers and portfolios were covered with dust; a sketch of a group of trees—the last thing on which I had seen Cornelius engaged—lay on the table unfinished, but soiled with lying about.

I opened one of the portfolios: it contained the drawings he most valued. I took them out, and, kneeling on the floor, spread them around me. Absorbed in looking at them, I never heard Cornelius enter, until his voice said close to me—

"What are you doing here?"

"I was looking at these," I replied, in some confusion.

"Then you were taking a great liberty."

I silently began to restore the drawings to the portfolio; he said shortly—

"They will do on the floor." And he walked across them to the window.

"Cornelius," I observed, timidly, "you are standing on the head of the poor Italian boy, and you are going to tread on the flower-girl."

"They are only fit to burn," was his misanthropic reply.

"Let me take them away," I urged.

He seemed disposed to answer angrily, but he restrained himself and stepped aside. I removed the drawings, carefully replaced them in the portfolio, gently slipped in a few more, then stole up a glance at Cornelius: he was looking down at me with a displeased face.

"Lay down that portfolio," he said.

"Pray don't burn them!" I exclaimed, tearfully.

"Leave the room," he said, impatiently.

I obeyed, but as I reached the door I saw Cornelius go to the fire-place and take down the match-box. It might be to light a cigar, or make a bonfire of the drawings.

"Don't, pray don't," I entreated.

"Don't what?" he asked, lighting the match.

"Don't burn your beautiful drawings, Cornelius, pray don't."

"Daisy! did I or did I not tell you to leave the room?"

I stood near the door: I opened and closed it again, but unable to resist the temptation of ascertaining to what fate the drawings were reserved, I was stooping to look through the keyhole, when the door suddenly opened, and Cornelius appeared on the threshold.

"Go down at once," he said, angrily.

I obeyed, and, crying with vexation and grief, I entered the parlour where Kate sat sewing.

"Oh, Kate!" I exclaimed through my tears, "Cornelius is burning his drawings!"

"Is he?" was her calm reply.

"He turned me out, pray go and prevent him."

"Is there a great quantity of them?" she asked.

"Three large portfolios and a little one."

"That must make quite a heap."

"You might save a few by going now, Kate."

"He will be some time about it," she musingly observed; "better delay the tea a little."

"Kate, they will be all burned if you don't go."

"I hope he will be careful," said Miss O'Reilly, a little uneasily; "I hope he will not set the chimney on fire."

It was plain she would not take a step to save the drawings. I sat down in the darkest corner of the room and grieved silently over this miserable end to so many bright day-dreams. It was a long time before Cornelius came down; he apologized for having delayed the tea.

"Never mind!" said Kate, sighing. "Daisy, where are you? That child does nothing but mope and fret of late."

"I am here, Kate," I replied, rising.

"Hand Cornelius his cup."

"What is the matter with her?" he asked.

"She is a foolish child," replied Miss O'Reilly.

As I handed his cup to Cornelius, I saw his sister give him a look of gentle pity. He smiled cheerfully; she sighed; he kindly asked what was the matter.

"There are hard things to be gone through," was her ambiguous reply.

"Why, yes, Kate, there are."

"They require a brave spirit," she continued.

He looked puzzled.

"But it is quite right to cut the matter short."

"Kate, what has happened?"

"Well, it is not an event; but I admire your courage."

"My courage! in what?"

"Why, in burning your drawings, of course."

He bit his lip, reddened, and said gravely—

"I have not been burning them, Kate."

"Not burning them!" she exclaimed, with a sharp look at me.

"Daisy is not to blame," quickly observed Cornelius.

"Not burning them!" resumed Miss O'Reilly; "and I who kept tea waiting until it was spoiled in order not to disturb you!"

"Thank you all the same, Kate."

"Not burning them!" she said, giving him a very suspicious look, "and what were you doing up there, Cornelius?"

"Finishing a little thing which I will show you tomorrow."

"He's going to flirt with painting again!" desperately said Miss O'Reilly, rocking herself to and fro.

"I hope to go beyond flirtation, Kate."

"My poor boy, don't trust her,—she is a heartless coquette."

"No, Kate, she is merely coy,—a charming feminine defect that only makes her more irresistibly alluring."

"You have tried her once."

"And failed; I must try again: faint heart never won fair lady."

He spoke so gaily, he looked once more so happy, so confident, that the cloud left his sister's handsome face. She checked a sigh, to say with a smile—

"I was a fool to trust to the vows of a man in love; that is all."

"Yes," he said, resolutely, "I know I vowed to give her up a few weeks ago; but now, Kate, I vow I cannot—I cannot; no man can divide himself from his nature."

"What will you do?" she asked.

"Anything, Kate," he replied, his eyes kindling with hope and ardour; "no drudgery will seem drudgery, no work too hard."

I could keep in no longer. At the imminent risk of upsetting his cup, I threw my arms around the neck of Cornelius, and, crying for joy, I exclaimed—

"Oh! I am so glad that you are to be a great artist after all—and that you did not burn the Italian boy nor the poor flower-girl!"

"Am I an inquisitor?" asked Cornelius, smiling.

"She is as mad as he is," said Kate, shaking her head; "indeed I rather think she is worse."

He laughed, and, drawing me on his knee, petted me even to my craving heart's content. I had not been well of late; the joyous excitement with which I had learned his return to Art once over, I became listless and languid. Cornelius had to remind me of the lessons; I know not how I answered him, but in the very middle of them he pushed away the books, said that would do, and made me sit by him on the sofa. Kate looked at me a little uneasily. Cornelius was always kind, but I had never known him so kind as on this evening. He read to me, sang and played, then returned to the couch on which I lay, and, with a tender fondness I shall ever remember, he pressed me to tell him if there was anything I should like.

"Nothing, thank you," I replied, languidly.

"A book?" he persisted; "no! well then a rosewood workbox—a desk? I have some money, child; look."

He drew out his purse and showed it to me, but I thanked him and refused.

"Is there nothing you would like?" he asked.

"I should like to know the subject of your next picture."

"As if I should paint but one," he replied, gaily; and he proceeded to describe to me, in a few graphic words, a magnificent collection of Holy Families, grand historical battles, tragic stories, dewy landscapes, exquisite domestic scenes, until, charmed by their variety, but rather startled by their number, I exclaimed—

"Cornelius, it will take a gallery to hold them all."

"Let us build one then," he replied, striving to repress a smile, "and whenever you feel dull, as you did this evening, we will take a walk in it. Look at her, Kate," he added, addressing his sister, "don't you think she seems better?"

"I think," answered Kate, rather astonished, "that I never saw you lay yourself out for girl or woman, as you did this evening for that little pale face. My opinion is, that the foolish way in which she goes on about your pictures has won your heart."

"Since you have found it out, Kate, it is useless to deny it. I am waiting for Daisy. Am I not?" he added, turning to me with a smile.

"No," I replied, half indignantly.

"She won't have me," he said, feigning deep dejection; "ungrateful girl! is it for this I have so often brought you home apples, gingerbread, and nuts, not harder than your heart?"

Unmoved by this pathetic appeal, I persisted in rejecting Cornelius, whom, even in jest, I could not consider otherwise than as my dear adopted father. Miss O'Reilly settled the point by saying it was quite ridiculous for little girls not yet twelve to be sitting up so late. As she rose and took me by the hand, I bade Cornelius good-night. He kissed me, not once, but two or three times, and so much more tenderly than usual, that Kate said, smiling—

"Cornelius, you are very fond of that child."

"Yes, Kate, I am. Next to you, there is nothing I like half so well in this world, and, somehow or other, I do not think I have ever felt fonder of her than this evening."

My cheek lay close to his, his heavy hair brushed my face, his eyes looked into mine with something sad in their fondness. I felt how much, how truly, how purely the good young man loved the child he had adopted, and returning his tender embrace, I was happy, even to a sense of pain.

I believe in the presentiments of the heart, and

I believe that on this evening, and at that moment, Cornelius and I unconsciously had each ours, and each, though different from the other, was destined to be fulfilled. The next day Cornelius knew why he had felt so unusually fond of me: I was dangerously ill, and for days and weeks my life was despaired of.

## CHAPTER XI.

THAT time is still to me a blank, on the vague background of which stand forth two vivid and distinct images. One is that of Cornelius, sitting by me and holding my hand in his: the other, that of a tall, pale, and fair-haired lady, who stood at the foot of my bed, clad in white, calm and beautiful as a vision. I had never seen her before, and I remember still how I vainly tormented my poor feverish brain to make out who she was. I have a vague recollection that I one day framed the question, "Who are you?"

"Miriam," she replied, in a voice as sweet and as cold as a silver bell, and she laid her finger on her lips, to enjoin silence. The name told me nothing, but my wandering mind was too much confused to follow out any train of thought. I accustomed myself to her presence, without striving to

know more. Another day, I remember her better still. She was standing at the foot of the bed, half hidden by the white curtain. A little further on, Cornelius talked to a grave-looking man, in tones which, though low, awoke me from my dreamy unconsciousness.

"I can give you no hope," said the physician, for such even then I knew him to be: "it will end in a decline."

"Oh! doctor," entreated Cornelius, "she is so young, scarcely twelve."

"My dear Sir, we do not work miracles, and those excitable children—"

"But my poor little Daisy is so quiet," interrupted Cornelius; "you never knew such a quiet child; she will sit still for hours whilst I am drawing or painting. Indeed, Sir," he added, giving the doctor an appealing look, "she is the quietest little creature breathing."

"Well, Sir," replied the physician, "I will not say that she cannot outlive this, but she is too slight, too delicate for me to hold out much hope for the future."

He left. When he was gone Cornelius bent over me. "My poor little Daisy," he said, in a low, sad tone,"—my poor little Daisy, I did not think you would wither so very early."

Two hot tears fell on my face.

"Mr. O'Reilly," said a sweet voice behind him, "the child will live, you love her too much, she cannot die."

I looked languidly through my half-closed eyes. Miriam stood by Cornelius; she had placed her hand on his shoulder; he sat half turned round, gazing at her with astonishment. She smiled and continued—

"My child was given up three times; but I loved her; I would not let her go; she stayed with me; your child too shall stay."

"May God bless you at least for the prediction!" he replied in a low tone, and, stooping, he laid his lips on her hand; she coloured, and I saw Kate, then in the act of coming in, stand still with wonder on the threshold of the open door.

That same day a favourable crisis took place, and when the physician called again, he pronounced me out of danger. Only Kate and Cornelius were present, and I shall never forget their joy; I do not think that if I had been their own child they could have felt a purer and deeper gladness. The happy face of Cornelius, as he bent over me and gave me a kiss, was alone something to remember. I recovered rapidly; one of my first requests was to be carried up to the studio, and, every precau-

tion being taken that I should not get cold, it was complied with on a pleasant July morning. I looked at the picture Cornelius had begun during my illness, then I asked him to place me near the open window. It overlooked our garden and that of our tenant, Miss Russell, an old maiden lady, of whom I had never caught more than a few distant glimpses. I was accustomed to see her garden as quiet and lonely as ours, which it resembled; to my surprise I now there perceived a strange group. In the honeysuckle bower sat two ladies; one read aloud to an old blind woman, who after a while said—

"That'll do for today, my blessed young lady."

"Would you like to go in, nurse?" asked the lady very sweetly.

"I think I should. You need not mind, Miss Ducky," she said, addressing the other lady, "my dear young lady will do it."

The lady who had read now helped the old woman to rise, and led her in with great care. She soon returned alone, resumed her place, and read to herself from a smaller volume. She was attired in white, and with her head slightly bent, and her book on her lap, she looked as calm and still as a garden statue. The other lady was very young, a mere girl, short, pretty, fresh as a rose, and with glossy dark ringlets. She had been very restless

during the reading, and had indulged in two or three little yawns. She now seemed joyous and happy at the release, and hovered around the bower light and merry as a bee. There was an airy grace about her little person that rendered motion as becoming to her as was repose to the other lady. She skipped and started about with restless vivacity; now she plucked a flower; now she stripped a shrub of its leaves; then suddenly turning round, she addressed her companion in the tones of a spoiled child:

"Miriam, leave off reading! you won't?—take that!"

She gathered a rose and threw it at her.

Miriam raised her beautiful face, calm as the surface of unstirred waters, and said, in a voice that rose sweetly on the air—

"Child, what is it?"

"Don't read."

Miriam closed her book.

"And come here."

Miriam rose and went up to her.

"How can you read so to stupid old nurse?" resumed the young girl; "I don't like Baxter."

"She likes it, my darling, and she is blind, and cannot read for herself."

"But if I were as jealous of you as you are of

me," continued she whom the old woman had called Ducky, "*I* should not like it."

She laid her curled head on the shoulder of the beautiful Miriam, who stooped and gave her a long embrace. Then they walked up and down the garden, arm in arm, talking in lower tones. I turned to ask Cornelius who were the ladies, and I found that he stood behind me, looking down intently.

"Cornelius," I said, "did not the lady they call Miriam, come and see me when I was ill?"

"Yes, child," he replied, without looking at me, and returning to his easel as he spoke.

"Who is she?"

"Miss Russell, the niece of our tenant."

"Who is the other one?"

"Her sister."

"Have they been here long, Cornelius?"

"They came the week you were taken ill."

"Did Miss Russell come and see me often?"

"Every day; one night she sat up with you."

"She has not come of late, Cornelius?"

"No," he replied, still without looking at me; "she came one day unsought, and left off coming as soon as you were out of danger."

"How good she seems to her nurse!"

"She is all goodness."

"And how fond of her sister!"

"She is wrapt up in her."

"And yet she is much more beautiful, is she not, Cornelius?" I added, again looking down into the garden, where the sisters now sat in the bower. Cornelius left his easel to come and look too.

"Nonsense, child!" he replied, smiling, "the little one is much the prettier of the two. Ask Kate," he added, as the door opened, and his sister entered.

"Humph," said Miss O'Reilly, on being appealed to, "your eyes are better than mine, Cornelius, to see the difference at this distance; but I think Miss Ducky a pretty little roly-poly thing, and her sister a fine woman, though rather icy."

"Roly-poly!" indignantly echoed Cornelius, "why, Kate, she is exquisitely pretty!"

"Don't you fear the child may take cold?" said Miss O'Reilly, coming up to the window, which she closed with a mistrustful look, that seemed to say to it—"I wish *you* were not there."

I spent about an hour more with Cornelius, who did his best to entertain me, by talking of the gallery, then took me back to my room, where Kate kept me company. I questioned her concerning Miss Russell, but learned little. She supposed it was very kind of her to come, though to be sure I did not want her; and cool people were often

peculiar; and other things which I did not understand. I asked if any one else had come.

"Mr. Smalley, who has been disappointed of the Dorsetshire curacy after all, and Mr. Trim came several times."

"I hope Mr. Trim did not kiss me," I said, uneasily, for this amiable individual still persisted in being affectionate to me.

"Nonsense, child, I promise you they were more taken up in looking at Miss Russell, than in thinking of you. Sleep, for they are to come this evening, and I know Cornelius would like to take you down for an hour."

I did my best to gratify her, and soon succeeded, and the same evening I was dressed and wrapped up, or rather swathed like a mummy, said Cornelius, as he carried me down in his arms. He had scarcely laid me on the couch in the parlour, when Deborah announced "Miss Russell."

A pretty head, with drooping ringlets, peeped in, and as suddenly vanished.

"Pray come in, Miss Russell," said Kate, rising.

"You are engaged," lisped a soft voice behind the door.

"Not at all, pray come in."

"You—you are at tea, then."

"We shall not have tea for an hour, pray come in."

"I would rather come some other time," said the little voice, still speaking from the door, but rather more faintly.

"Surely my brother does not frighten you?"

"Oh no," faltered the timid speaker, in a tone that said, "Oh dear yes, precisely."

Kate rose and walked to the door. We heard a giggle, a little suppressed denial, and finally saw Miss O'Reilly re-enter the parlour and lead in the bashful creature. Miss Ducky was in a state of bewitching confusion and under-her-breath modesty. "She came to know how the little girl was —so glad she was well again. Sit down! Oh no, she would rather be excused."

She spoke with girlish fluency of easy speech, with many a gentle toss of the glossy curls, and glancing of the bright dark eyes that looked everywhere save in the direction of Cornelius. Kate was vainly pressing her to sit down, when the fair creature was further alarmed by the entrance of Mr. Smalley and Mr. Trim. In her confusion she flew to the bow window instead of the door—"was astonished at the mistake—so absurd—quite stupid, you know," and stood there blushing most charmingly, when Kate at length persuaded her to sit down. By this time I had received the congratulations of Mr. Smalley and Mr. Trim, both of whom

looked with some interest and curiosity at Miss Ducky.

There never was such a little flirt. The introduction was scarcely over when she attacked Mr. Trim with a look, Mr. Smalley with a smile, and Cornelius with look, smile, and speech, and having thus hooked them, she went on with the three to her own evident enjoyment and delight. Mr. Trim, whom the ladies had not accustomed to such favours, seemed exulting, and indulged in the most unbounded admiration. After warning Miss Ducky that she need not mind him, he edged his chair nearer to hers, and peering in her face, asked to know the number of hearts she had broken.

"I broke a cornelian heart the other day," she replied, demurely; "I was so sorry."

"Could it not be mended?" innocently asked Mr. Smalley.

"I don't know," she answered, childishly, "I did not try; I used to wear it round my neck—it is in a drawer now."

"Poor heart!" compassionately said Cornelius.

She laughed, and gaily shook her curls, but suddenly became as mute as a mouse, and, with the frightened glance of a child taken at fault, she looked at the door, on the threshold of which her sister now stood unannounced.

Miriam entered quietly, passed by Cornelius and me without giving either a look, and apologized to Kate for her intrusion; but Miss Ducky had, it seemed, been suddenly missed, to the great alarm of her relatives, whom the sound of her voice next door had alone relieved from their painful apprehensions. Miss Ducky heard all this with downcast eyes and a penitent face, and stood ready to follow her sister, who had pertinaciously refused to take a seat. Mr. Trim seemed rather anxious to detain them, and, bending forward with his hands on his knees to catch a look of Miriam's beautiful face, he said—

"Your sister, Ma'am, was telling us of the hearts—"

"I only spoke of the cornelian," interrupted Ducky, looking alarmed.

Miriam looked through Mr. Trim with her calm blue eyes, bade Miss O'Reilly good evening, smiled at Mr. Smalley, who coloured, then leading away her sister, she again passed by Cornelius and me with a chilling bend of the head.

"Pretty girl!" said Mr. Trim, shutting his eyes as the door closed upon them.

"Has she not very classical features?" observed Mr. Smalley, seeming surprised.

"Oh, you mean the fair one," sneered Mr. Trim.

"It is very well for you, Smalley, a clergyman, to admire a girl who is as proud as Lucifer, just because she has a Greek nose—"

"I admire Miss Russell," interrupted Mr. Smalley, reddening, "because the first time I saw her she was fulfilling that precept of our Divine Lord, which enjoins that the sick shall be visited and the afflicted comforted."

"Every man to his taste," replied Mr. Trim. "I like that pretty little thing best, and so would Cornelius, if he were not such a confirmed woman-hater. Ha! ha!"

"I hope not," said Mr. Smalley, looking with mild surprise at Cornelius, who did not repel the accusation, but seemed absorbed in my request of being taken upstairs again. I was still weak, and the talking made my head ache. I bade our two visitors good-night, and again had to resist Mr. Trim's attempt to embrace me. I believe he knew how much I disliked his ugly face, and would have found a malicious pleasure—I now acquit him of caring for the kiss—in compelling mine to endure its proximity. As I saw it bend towards me, grinning, I screamed, and took refuge in the arms of Cornelius, who said, a little impatiently—

"Do let that child alone, Trim."

Mr. Trim went back to his chair, saying, mourn-

fully, "he never had luck with the ladies, whereas Cornelius, being a handsome, dashing young fellow, and Smalley rather wild—a thing women always liked—"

I lost the rest, for Cornelius, who was carrying me out of the room, shut the door, muttering something in which "Trim" and "insolence" were all I could hear distinctly.

Two days after this, I was well enough to be carried down to the garden in the arms of Cornelius, who sacrificed an hour of daylight to sitting by me on the bench. It was a warm and pleasant noon, and I was enjoying the delightful sense of existence which recovery from illness yields, when Miriam Russell suddenly appeared before us. She always had a noiseless step and had come down the steps from the porch so quietly that we had never heard her. I saw the blood rush to the brow of Cornelius, and felt the hand which mine clasped, tremble slightly. Miss Russell looked very calm; she asked me how I was; I replied, "Very well," and thanked her, in a lone tone. Her statue-like beauty repelled the very idea of familiarity; her white chiselled features had the purity and coldness of sculptured marble; her face was faultless in outline, but it was too colourless, and her eyes, though fine and clear, were of a blue too

pale. She gave me a careless look, then said to Cornelius, after refusing to be seated—

"You have kept your child."

"She is still very weak."

"Never mind, she will grow like my child yet."

Cornelius liked me too well not to be partial.

"Yes, she would be pretty if she were not so pale," he replied.

"You spoil her, do you not?" asked Miriam.

"Kate says so. Do I spoil you, Daisy?"

I said "Yes," and half hid my face on his shoulder, whence I looked at Miriam, who smiled, as if the fondness of Cornelius for me, and mine for him, gave her pleasure to see.

"She spoils me, but she won't let me have my way," said a soft lisping voice from the porch. We looked, and saw Miss Ducky's pretty curled head bending forward and looking at us. Her sister's whole face underwent a change on seeing her.

"But then she's so jealous," continued Ducky, pouting, "I hope you are not jealous of Daisy."

"Foolish child!" said Miriam, striving to smile.

"But then she's very fond of me," resumed Ducky, smiling; "when Doctor Johnson, stupid man, said I could not live, she was nearly distracted. Silly of her, was it not Mr. O'Reilly?"

Her look so pertinaciously sought his that he could scarcely have avoided looking at her. She was very pretty thus in the gloom of the porch, and he smiled at her fresh young beauty. I saw Miriam glance uneasily from one to the other, then a cloud gathered over her brow. She bade us a sudden adieu, went up to her sister, and led her away, spite of her evident reluctance. Cornelius continued to look like one entranced on the spot where Miriam had lately stood; I was but a child, yet I knew he was now listening to the sweet and delusive voice of passion, unheeded during the earlier years of his youth, and enchanting him at last. I was watching his face attentively: he looked down, met my glance, and said quietly—

"Confess Miss Ducky is much prettier than her sister."

If he wanted me to contradict, he was disappointed.

"Yes, Cornelius," I replied, "she is."

"I thought you admired Miriam most," he said a little shortly.

"I did not know then she had green eyes."

This was true: the hue of Miriam's eyes, of a blue verging on green, was the fault of her face; I had been quick to detect it; Cornelius reddened and never broached the subject again.

Miriam came no more near us, and kept such good watch on her young sister, that we never had the opportunity of again comparing them together. Strange and sad to say, as autumn opened, the young girl sickened and in a few weeks died in the arms of her sister, childish and unconscious to the last. Miss O'Reilly and I watched the funeral leaving the house; as I saw it pass by, I felt as if Death, baulked of one prey and unwilling to leave our dwelling unsated, had seized on her, and I startled Kate by observing—

"Kate, don't you think poor Miss Ducky died instead of me?"

"Bless the child!" exclaimed Kate, turning pale, "never say that again."

But the fancy had taken hold of me, and, unless I am much deceived, of another too. Weeks elapsed before we saw anything of the bereaved sister. We heard that, wrapt in her grief, she remained for days locked in her room, and there brooded over her loss, rejecting consolation with scorn, and indulging in passionate mourning. Kate blamed this excessive sorrow; her brother never uttered one word of praise or blame.

Though my health was much improved, I was still delicate and subject to attacks of languor. One evening, Kate, seeing me scarcely able to sit

up, wanted me to go to bed; but Cornelius had been out all day, I wished to await his return, so I went to the back-parlour, reclined on a couch, and there fell asleep.

I was partly awakened by the sound of voices talking earnestly in the next room, of which the door stood half open. I listened, still half asleep: one of the voices was that of Cornelius, passionately entreating; the other that of Miriam, coldly denying and accusing him of infidelity to the dead, whilst with ardent warmth he protested that she alone had been mistress of his thoughts. I sat up on the couch amazed and confounded. My room was dark, they could not see me, but I could see them. Miriam sat by the table, clad in deep mourning; Cornelius by her, with his face averted from me; he held her hand in his, still entreating; she said nothing, but she no longer denied. He raised her hand to his lips unreproved; whilst a bright rosy hue, that seemed too ardent for a blush, passed over her face, late so pale with grief.

I sank back on my couch, frightened at having heard and seen what had never been meant for my ear or sight; but I could not help it; I could not leave the room where I was, without breaking in upon them; twice I rose to do so, but each time

my courage failed me. So I kept quiet, and stopping my ears with my fingers, did my best not to hear. I could not however help catching words now and then, and once I heard Miriam saying—

"Do you know why I, who never thought of you before this last hour, now wish to love you?—because you are so unlike me."

What Cornelius replied I know not. Soon after this Miss Russell left. Cornelius had followed her to the door. He returned to the parlour, and throwing himself on the sofa, he there fell into a smiling reverie.

I softly left my couch, entered the parlour, and quietly sat down on a cushion at his feet. Cornelius looked as if he could not believe his eyes, then slowly sat up, and bent on me a face that darkened as he looked.

## CHAPTER XII.

"WHERE do you come from?" he asked.

"From the next room."

"Have you been there long?"

"The whole evening."

"I thought you were upstairs sleeping?"

"No, Cornelius, I was lying on the couch."

"And you have just awakened, I suppose?" he carelessly observed, but with his look bent keenly on my face. I answered in a faltering tone—

"I have been awake some time."

"Before Miss Russell left?"

"Yes, Cornelius."

The blood rushed up to his brow.

"You listened?" he exclaimed, with a wrathful glance.

"I heard, Cornelius," I replied, unwilling to

lose the distinction, "and heard as little as I could."

"Heard!" he indignantly echoed. "Upon my word! and why did you hear? Why did you not leave the room?"

"Twice I rose to do so; I made a noise on purpose; but you did not hear me, and I did not dare to disturb you."

Cornelius did not say which of the two evils—being disturbed or overheard by me—he would have preferred. I sat at his feet, wistfully looking up into his face. It was always expressive, and now told very plainly his annoyance and vexation. It would scarcely have been in the nature of mortal man, not to resent the presence of a witness on so interesting and delicate an occasion.

"I never heard anything like it," he exclaimed indignantly. "I am fond of you, Daisy, but you do not imagine I ever contemplated taking you—a little girl too—into my confidence, as twice I have been compelled to do. What do you mean by it?" he added, with a perplexed and provoked air, that to a looker-on might have been amusing.

"I mean nothing, Cornelius."

"Foolish child," he continued impatiently, "not to stay on your couch, and let me fancy you had slept through it!"

"But that would have been a great shame," I replied very earnestly; "I came out on purpose that you might know."

"Thank you!" he said drily.

"I shall not tell," I observed, in a low tone.

"It is to be no secret," he shortly answered.

I had no more to say. Cornelius rose impatiently, walked about the room, came back to his place, and still looked unable to get over the irritating consciousness of having been overheard.

I rose to go; he suddenly detained me.

"Stay," he said with a profound sigh, "it is most provoking—the more especially as there is no dipping you into Lethe—but '*Honi soit qui mal y pense.*' I did not say one word of which I need be ashamed, and as to its being a little ridiculous—why, it is very odd if a man cannot afford to be ridiculous now and then—eh, Daisy?"

He gave me an odd look, half shy, half amused. He could not help enjoying a joke, even though it might be at his own expense.

"Then you are not vexed with me, Cornelius?" I asked, looking up.

"Not a bit," he replied, smiling with perfect good-humour; "I acquit you of wilful indiscretion, my poor child; I should have shut the door—but one cannot think of everything."

He had laid his hand on my shoulder. I turned round and pressed my lips to it, for the first time, scarce knowing why I gave him the token of love and homage he had yielded to Miriam. It is thus in life: we are perpetually bestowing on those who give back again, but rarely to us. Every trace of vexation passed away from the face of Cornelius; he made room for me by his side, and as I sat there in my familiar attitude, he shook back his hair, and observed, with philosophic coolness—

"After all, she would have known it tomorrow; only," he added a little uneasily, "I think there is no necessity to let Miriam suspect anything of all this: you understand, Daisy?"

"Yes, Cornelius," I replied submissively.

He smiled.

"What a docile tone! Do you know, my pet, it is almost a pity there is not some romantic mystery in this matter: how discreet you would be! how you would carry letters or convey messages! but your good offices will never be needed."

He spoke gaily; I tried to smile, but he little knew how my heart was aching.

"I suppose, Cornelius, you will marry Miss Russell," I observed after awhile.

He smiled again.

"Soon, Cornelius?" He sighed and shook his head.

"Will you still live in this house?"

"Provided Miriam does not think it too small," he replied with a perplexed air, "but by uniting it to the next-door house, it would be quite large enough. Then I could have the upper part of both houses with a skylight,—much better than a place in town; besides I shall want her to sit to me—eh, Daisy?"

He turned to me; my face was partly averted from his gaze, or he must have read there the sharp and jealous torment every word he uttered awakened within me. Who was this stranger, that had stepped in between Cornelius and me, whose thought absorbed all his thoughts, whose image effaced every other image, who already made her supposed wishes his law, already snatched from me my most delightful and exclusive privileges? He seemed waiting for a reply; I compelled myself to answer—

"Yes, Cornelius."

"For our gallery, you know," he continued.

I did not reply; I felt sick and faint. He stooped and looked into my face with utter unconsciousness in his.

"How pale you look, my little girl!" he said with concern; "and you are feverish too. Go up to your room."

He bade me good-night, and kissed me two or three times with unusual warmth and tenderness. Jealousy is all quickness of spirit and of sense. I reluctantly endured caresses which I knew not to be mine; if I dared, I would have repelled those overflowings of a heart in whose joy and delight I had not the faintest part. Sweeter, dearer to me was the quiet, careless kiss I was accustomed to get, than all this tenderness springing from love to another. I was glad when Cornelius released me from his embrace; glad to leave him; glad to go upstairs and be wretched in liberty.

Never since Sarah had told me that my father was going to marry Miss Murray, had I felt as I now felt. The grief I had passed through after his death was more mighty, but it did not, like this, attack the existence of love and sting it in its very heart. Cornelius married to Miriam Russell, parted from us in the sweet communion of daily life, living with her in another home, painting his pictures for her and with her sitting to him or looking on,—alas! where should I be then?—was a thought so bitter, so tormenting, that it worked me into a fever, which fed eagerly on the jealousy that had given it birth.

Gone was the time when I stood next to Kate in his heart, and my loss was the gain of her whom

I had heard him making the aim of his future, the hope and joy of his life. His love for her might not exclude calmer affections, but it cast them beneath at an immeasurable distance. I could not bear this. I was jealous by temper and by long habit. My father had accustomed me to the dangerous sweetness of being loved ardently and without a rival; and though I had not expected so much from Cornelius, yet slowly, patiently, by loving him to an excess, I had made him love me too; and now it was all labour lost: she had reached at once the heart towards which I had toiled so long, and won without effort the exclusive affection it was hard not to win, but utter misery to see bestowed on another.

The manner of Kate on the following morning showed me she knew nothing; breakfast was scarcely over when she rather solemnly said to her brother—

"Cornelius, what did you do to that child whilst I was out yesterday?"

He stood by the fire-place looking down at the glowing embers and smiling at his own thoughts; he woke from his reverie, shook his head, opened his eyes, and looked up astonished.

"I have done nothing to her, Kate," he replied simply.

"She has been crying herself to sleep though!"

I had, and I heard her with dismay; he gave me a keen look.

"Her nerves are weak," he suggested.

"Nonsense!" did you ever know a fair-haired dark-eyebrowed man or woman to have weak nerves?"

"I know dark eyebrows are a rare charm for a blonde."

"Nonsense! charm!—I tell you it is an indication of character—of energy and wilfulness. It is all very well for the fair, meek hair to say, 'Oh! I'm so quiet;' I say the dark, passionate brow tells me another story, and as Daisy never cries without a reason, I should like to know what she has been crying about."

"Her health affects her spirits, that is all," hastily replied Cornelius; "come up with me, Daisy, it will cheer you."

I obeyed reluctantly. It was some time however before Cornelius took any notice of me. He stood looking at a study for a larger picture begun during my illness. It represented poor children playing on a common, and was to be called "The Happy Time."

"And don't they look happy?" observed Cornelius, turning to me with a smile.

He was perhaps struck with the fact that the child he addressed did not look a very happy one, for, with the abruptness of a thing suddenly remembered, he said—

"By the bye, what did you cry for, Daisy?"

I hung down my head and did not reply.

"Did you hear me?"

"Yes, Cornelius."

"Then answer, child."

I did not; he looked astonished.

"Answer," he said again.

I felt myself tnrning red and pale, but to tell him I was jealous of Miriam Russell! no I could not; the confession was too bitter, too humiliating.

"Daisy," he said, "I shall get angry."

I stood by him obstinately mute. I looked up at him with a dreary sorrowful gaze; he frowned and bit his lip. I summoned all my courage to bear his coming wrath; to my dismay he chucked my chin, and said with careless good humour—

"As if I should not be fond of you all the same, you jealous little thing!"

And with the smile which he no longer repressed he turned away whistling 'Love's young dream.' Vexed and mortified to the quick, I burst into tears; Cornelius turned round and showed me an astonished face.

"Nonsense!" he exclaimed, laughing incredulously, "you never can be crying, Daisy!"

The laugh, the gay, careless tone exasperated me. I turned to the door to fly somewhere out of his sight; he caught me back and lifted me up. In vain I resisted; with scarcely an effort he mastered me and laughed again at my unavailing efforts to escape. Breathless with my recent resistance, irritated by my subjection, I lay in his arms mute and sullen. He bent his amused face over mine.

"You are an odd little girl," he said, with the most provoking good-humour, looking with his merry brown eyes into mine, that were still heavy with tears, and speaking gaily, as if my jealousy, anger, and weeping were but a jest; "I suppose you object to my marrying—well, that's a pity—but it is all your fault! You know I wanted to wait for you, only you would not hear of it, so I naturally got desperate and looked out elsewhere."

With this, and as if to humble and mortify me to the last, he stooped to embrace me. In vain, burning and indignant, I averted my face; he only laughed and kissed me two or three times more. To be thus gently ridiculed, laughed at, and kissed, was more than I could bear. I submitted, but with a bursting heart, that betrayed itself by ill-repressed sobs and tears. Cornelius saw this was

more than childish pettishness: "Daisy!" he exclaimed with concern, and he put me down at once.

There was a little couch close by; I threw myself upon it, and hid in the pillow my shame and my grief. He said and did all he could to pacify me; but when I looked up a little soothed, it stung me to read in his eyes the smile his lips repressed. The folly of a child of my age in presuming to be jealous of his beautiful Miriam, was evidently irresistibly amusing. My tears and my sobs ceased at once. I locked in the poignant feelings which could win no sympathy even from him who caused them. I listened with downcast eyes to his consolations, and apathetically submitted to his caresses. But Cornelius, satisfied that it was all right, chid me gently for having made him lose "ten precious minutes," gave me a last kiss, and returned to his easel. At once I rose and said—

"May I go downstairs?"

"Of course," he replied; but he looked surprised at the unusual request.

I remained below all day. When after tea I brought out my books as usual, Cornelius very coolly said—

"My dear, Kate will hear you this evening."

He took his hat and left us. As the door closed upon him, Miss O'Reilly shook her head and poked the fire pensively. I saw she knew all. Once or twice she sighed rather deeply, but subduing this she observed with forced cheerfulness—

"Well, Daisy, let us go through those lessons."

We did go through them, but with strange inattentiveness on either side.

"Nonsense, child!" impatiently exclaimed Kate; "why do you keep stopping and listening so, it is only Cornelius singing next door; what about it?"

What about it? nothing, of course; and yet you too, Kate, stopped often in your questioning to catch the tones of your brother's gay and harmonious voice; you, too, guessed that the time when he could feel happy to stay at home and sing to you was for ever gone by; you, too, when the lessons were over, sadly looked at his vacant place, and felt how far now was he whose song and whose laughter resounded from the next house. Oh, Love! invader of the hearth, pitiless destroyer of its sweetest ties, for two hearts whom thou makest blest in delightful union, how many dost thou wound and divide asunder!

We had thought to spend the evening alone, but a strange chance, not without sad significance,

brought us an unexpected visitor; the Reverend Morton Smalley called, for once unaccompanied by Mr. Trim. He was more gentle and charming than ever. He expressed himself very sorry not to see Cornelius, whom he evidently thought absent on some laborious errand, for looking at Kate in his benignant way over his spotless neckcloth and through his bright gold spectacles, he earnestly begged "she would not allow her brother to work so very hard."

She shook her head and smiled a little sadly.

"I fear Art absorbs him completely," gravely said Mr. Smalley.

"Oh dear no!" sighed Kate.

"We were never intended to lead a purely intellectual life," continued our guest, bending slightly forward, and raising his fore-finger with mild conviction, "and I fear your brother, Ma'am, is too much given to what I may venture to term the abstract portion of life: life has very lovely and tender realities."

Kate poked the fire impatiently.

"And then he works too hard," pensively continued Mr. Smalley, returning to his old idea that Cornelius was engaged on some arduous task: "why not give himself one evening's relaxation?"

I sat apart on a low stool, unheeded and silent;

I know not what impulse made me look up in the face of our guest and say earnestly—

"Cornelius is gone to see Miss Miriam."

Mr. Smalley started like a man who has received an electric shock. He looked at me, at Kate; her face gave sorrowful confirmation of all he could suspect and dread. He said not a word, but turned very pale.

"Mr. Smalley," said Kate, "have a glass of wine."

He did not answer, he had not heard her; like one in a troubled dream, he passed his handkerchief across his moist brow and trembling lips. He made an effort to look more composed, as Kate handed him the glass of wine which she had poured out. He took it from her, smiled a faint ghastly smile, and said—

"I wish our friend every happiness."

But he could not drink his own pledge. He raised the glass to his lips, laid it down as if it were poison, rose, pressed the hand of Miss O'Reilly, and left us abruptly.

"Daisy," severely said Kate, "go up to your room." I obeyed, to spend another wretched night, not sleepless, but broken by feverish dreams and sudden wakenings.

I did not go near Cornelius on the following

day. Of this he took no notice, and again went out in the evening. I saw him depart with a sharp jealous pang. Ere long we heard him laughing next door.

"Just listen to him!" said Kate, smiling, "is he not enjoying himself! God bless him! that boy always had a gay laugh. Ah! many's the time, when, though I scarcely knew how to provide for the morrow, that laugh has made my heart light and hopeful—God bless him!"

On the next evening Miriam called. She entered the room quietly, sat down on the sofa, took a book from the table, looked listlessly over it, and spoke calmly as if nothing had occurred. Both she and Kate were more civil than cordial. Cornelius sat by Miss Russell. There was still a place vacant by him; it had always been mine; I took it and gently laid my head on his shoulder. As I did so, I met the glance of Miriam. She had not seen me until then: she started, turned pale, and, as if she resented that I, the weak sickly child, should still live, whilst her fair young sister lay cold in her grave, she said—

"How unwell that child looks!—but perhaps it is only because she is so sallow."

Childhood is fatally quick in catching the spirit of contest. I reddened, looked at her, and sud-

denly pressed my lips to the cheek of Cornelius, conscious this was more than she dare do.

"Be quiet, child!" he said a little impatiently.

I gave him a look of keen reproach; he did not heed it; his eyes were again bent on Miriam; he was again absorbed in her. The child whom he had petted and caressed evening after evening, for two years, was now forgotten as if she had never existed.

"Daisy," said Kate, "come and help me to wind this skein."

She saw my misery, and did this to give me a pretence to leave them; but I would not yield. As soon as the skein was wound, I returned to my place by Cornelius; for two hours I persisted in staying there, vainly striving to win a caress, a word, a look. Alas! he did not even know I was by him. He was talking to Miriam of a new piece of music, and said—

"I shall tell Daisy to look it out for you to-morrow."

"Daisy is here," replied Miss Russell, "by you."

He turned round astonished, and exclaimed—

"Why, so she is!"

To be so near him and yet so far apart, was too great a torment. My heart swelled as if it would

burst. Stung at his cruel indifference, I rose, and without looking back I went up to Kate, sat down on the lowly cushion at her feet, and thus silently relinquished the place which had been mine so long.

Miriam Russell was now acknowledged as the betrothed of Cornelius. She was twenty-six, and independent both in her means and in her actions. Her aunt declared "that she had made a very bad match, and that she was throwing herself away on a handsome, penniless Irishman, whose artful sister was at the bottom of it all."

This speech was repeated to Miss O'Reilly, and brought on a great coolness between her and her tenant. Kate resented especially the reflection on her brother. Without letting him know what suggested the remark, she observed to him in my presence—and it was the only comment on his engagement I ever heard her make—

"Cornelius, Miss Russell has some property, but I trust you will not think of marriage before you have won a position."

"No, indeed," he replied, reddening, and throwing back his head half indignantly.

I now never went near Cornelius unless when sent by Kate. At first I had hoped he would miss me, but sufficient companionship to him was the

charmed presence which haunts the lover's solitude; he asked not why I stayed away, and pride forbade me to return.

Passion had seized on him, and she absorbed all his faculties save one: he remained faithful to Art. He was a most enamoured lover, but not even for his mistress did he leave his easel, or lose an hour of daylight. She did not put him to a test, of which it was plain that, of his own accord, he would never dream. Every moment he could spare he gave to her; evening after evening he handed over my lessons to Kate, and left us to go next-door; he was still kind, but somehow or other the charm had departed from his kindness.

Several weeks had thus elapsed, when Miriam was suddenly summoned to the sick bed of an aged relative, who dwelt in a retired village twenty miles away. Cornelius seemed to feel this first separation very much. He sighed deeply when struck the hour that usually led him to his beloved, opened his cigar-case, and smoked what, if he had used a pipe, might have been termed the calumet of sorrow. But he was not one of those inveterate smokers who, from the clouds they raise around them, can look down on the tribulations of this world with Olympic serenity. When his cigar was out, he brought forth no other, and half sat on

the sofa with a most *ennuyé* aspect. Kate had gone up to her room, complaining of a bad headache. I sat reading by her vacant chair, in that place which had become the type of my altered destiny.

"Daisy!" all at once said Cornelius.

I looked up.

"Come here," he continued.

I rose and obeyed, and, standing before him, waited to hear what he had to say to me. He said nothing, but stretched out his arm and drew me on his knee, smiling as he met my startled look, and felt my heart beating against the arm that encircled me.

"Are you afraid?" he asked.

"Oh no, Cornelius," I replied, but I felt astonished and happy at this unexpected return of kindness; so happy that, ashamed of it, I hid my face on his shoulder. He laughed because I would not look up, kissed my averted cheek, and finally compelled my burning face and overflowing eyes to meet his gaze.

"How perverse you have been!" he said, chidingly; "I don't know what tempted me to take any notice of you again; I am too fond of you, you jealous, sulky little creature."

His old affection seemed to have returned in all

its warmth; his look had the old meaning, his voice the old familiar accent, his manner more than the old tenderness. When I saw myself again so near him, again petted, caressed, loved, how could I but forget Mirian, the past and the future, to yield to the irresistible charm of the moment? Oh! why was he so imprudently kind? Why, when I was growing almost accustomed to his indifference, almost resigned, did he unconsciously destroy the slow labour of weeks, and sow for us both the seed of future torment? But I thought not of that then, nor did he. If I was glad to be once more near him, I saw in his face—and it was that undid me—that he was glad to have back again the child of whom he had for more than two years been so fond. He caressed me as after a long separation, and smoothing my hair, asked the question he had often put to me during my lingering illness—

"What shall we talk about?"

"The Gallery," was my prompt reply.

"Will you never tire of it, my darling?"

"Never, Cornelius."

"Well, I have been making an addition to it lately: a Gipsy couple in a green lane—the husband lying idly on the grass—his dark-eyed wife cooking."

"And the child?"

"There is none, for I speak of a real Gipsy couple who are to come to sit to me tomorrow, but who have no child."

"Could not I do, Cornelius?"

"Do you, with your fair hair, look like a little Gipsy?"

"I might be a stolen child, Cornelius."

"So you might!" cried Cornelius, his whole face lighting up at the idea; "why, it is an excellent, an admirable subject! What a tender and pathetic contrast!—they the type of rude animal enjoyment and power, you, like divine Una among the Satyrs, a meek and intellectual captive. A sketch! I shall make a picture of it—a fine picture—a great picture, please God."

He rose, and walked about the room quite excited; his eyes had kindled and burned with inward light; his face glowed with triumph. Once he paused, and with his fore-finger rapidly traced on the air lines which had already struck his fancy for the arrangement of the group; then he came back to me and gravely said—

"I see it, Daisy, it is painted, finished, and hung in the great room; in the meanwhile let us discuss the particulars."

We discussed them, or rather Cornelius spoke, and I approved unconditionally every word he ut-

tered, until, to our common astonishment, the clock struck eleven. As he bade me good-night, Cornelius laid his hand on my head, and said, admiringly—

"You clever little thing to have thought of it! no wonder I am fond of you; but do you know you will have to dress in rags, like a poor little drudge?"

"As if I minded it, Cornelius!" I quickly replied.

He smiled and kissed me very kindly. I went up to my room, to be as restless and wakeful with joy as I had not so long ago been with bitter grief.

Early the next morning I stole up to the studio. Cornelius was already at work; he never looked round as I entered, but observed, with a smile—

"So you have at length found your way up here."

I did not answer.

"What kept you away so long?" he continued.

"I thought you did not want me."

"Did I ever want you?"

"No, that is true."

"Then why do you come now?"

"Shall I go away, Cornelius?"

He turned round smiling.

"Look at them," he said, nodding towards an open portfolio, "you have not seen them yet."

He alluded to several sketches of a child in various attitudes, intended for the "Happy Time."

"I have seen them, Cornelius," I replied.

"And when, if you please?"

"I came up the other day when you were out. Pray do not be vexed, but I could not bear any longer not to see what you were doing."

Vexed! oh, he did not look vexed at all with this proof of my constant admiration. Flattery is so sweet, so subtle, so intoxicating. All he said was—

"Well, which do you prefer?"

I luckily hit on the very sketch he himself approved.

"That child has a great deal of judgement," he observed, with thoughtful satisfaction: "I could trust to her opinion as to my own: it is the best, of course it is. There, put them all away; you have always kept my things in order for me until lately; see the mess in which they now are."

So they were, in a most artistic confusion, which I remedied with great alacrity. When we went down to breakfast, Kate, who had seen with pleasure that I had not of late been so much with her brother, asked, with some asperity, "If I was again going to settle myself upstairs."

"Precisely," replied Cornelius, and with great ardour and enthusiasm he told her of his intended

picture. "Such an admirable subject,—not at all so commonplace as the 'Happy Time.'"

Miss O'Reilly was horrified at the prospect of Gipsy sitters, and prophesied the utter ruin of her household. Cornelius laughed at her fears, and promised to keep such strict watch that no disaster could possibly occur. The Gipsy couple came the same day—a wild, restless-looking pair, who tried to the utmost the patience of Cornelius, and gave me many an odd, shy look as they saw me take my attitude, in the costume, more picturesque than attractive, of an old brown skirt, torn and made ragged for the purpose; a shabby bodice; my hair loose and tangled, and my neck, arms, and feet bare. They were very wilful, too, and had on the subject of attitudes ideas which differed materially from those of Cornelius. At length the group was formed, and in this first sitting he could take a rapid sketch of it, "just to fix the idea of it in his mind," he observed to Kate at tea-time; "they were a little restless for the first time, but I have no doubt we shall we get on very well, though you looked rather afraid of that swarthy fellow, Daisy."

"I did not like his eyes—nor those of his wife either, Cornelius."

"Why, there is a tea-spoon missing," hastily observed Kate, who had been holding a conference

at the door with Deborah; "you had not one in the studio, had you, Cornelius?"

He rose precipitately, left the room, and in a few minutes came down with a melancholy face.

"There was one and there is not one," he said, sadly,—"the perfidious wretches!"

"I shall send the police after them," warmly cried Kate.

"Will the police make them sit to me again?" impatiently asked Cornelius.

"Indeed I hope not," indignantly replied his sister.

"To leave me in such a predicament for the sake of a miserable tea-spoon!" he observed, feelingly.

"A miserable tea-spoon! one of the dozen that has been fifty years in the family, with our crest, a hawk's head, upon it too! I am astonished at you, Cornelius; a miserable tea-spoon! you speak as if you had been born with a silver spoon in your mouth."

Cornelius sighed profoundly by way of reply; but even so tender a disappointment could not weigh long on his cheerful temper.

"After all," he philosophically observed, "they left me my idea."

"I wish the tea-spoon had been an idea," shortly said Kate.

"Well, I wish it had," placidly replied her brother, "but I have at least the consolation of having hit on the very characters I wanted—arrant thieves."

"Indeed you did, Cornelius."

"I remember their features quite well, and shall without scruple consider and paint them too as the real abductors of Daisy; for it stands to reason that she would not be here now if they had only found some decent opportunity of abstracting her."

"Or if she had only been a tea-spoon!" sighed Kate.

"This incident will be of the greatest use to me," gravely continued Cornelius; "it will enable me to enter thoroughly into the spirit of the picture story."

This was rather too much for Kate. But Cornelius bore her reproaches with great serenity, and found another motive of consolation in the fact that I, the principal figure, being always under his hand, it really was not so bad after all.

Happy were the three weeks that followed. Cornelius had acquired great facility and worked hard; I sat to him nearly all the day long; we rested together, and he then put by his own fatigue to cheer and amuse me. It was to me as

if Miriam had never existed. Cornelius by no means forgot her, but even a man in love may think of other things besides his mistress, and a new picture on the easel was the most dangerous rival Miriam could dread in the heart of her betrothed. They wrote to one another daily; every morning Cornelius consecrated a quarter of an hour to love, then devoted himself heart and soul to his task; and I—as sharing in that task—occupied, I believe, a greater share of his thoughts and feelings than even his beautiful mistress.

One morning indeed, when the postman did not bring him his usual letter, he looked quite mournful, and began his labour with the declaration "that it was no use—he could not work," but after a quarter of an hour his brow had cleared and he was wholly absorbed in his task. He worked until we were both tired, he with painting, I with sitting; he then threw himself on the low couch, and wanted me to sit by him and talk as usual, but I said he looked drowsy.

"So I am, you little witch."

"Then pray sleep awhile."

"No, I should sleep too long."

"Shall I awaken you."

"You could not."

"Indeed I could, Cornelius."

"Promise not to mind my entreaties."

"I shall not mind them, Cornelius."

"Then take my watch, your poor father's present, Daisy, and wake me in a quarter of an hour."

He closed his eyes, and, having the happy faculty of sleeping when he liked, he was soon in deep slumber. I sat by him, the watch in one hand, the other resting on the cushion which pillowed his head; I neither moved nor spoke until the quarter of an hour was over, then, without a second's grace, I called him up.

"Five minutes more," he drowsily entreated.

"Not five seconds. I wish you would waken up, Cornelius, or I shall have to pinch you or pull your hair."

"Pull and pinch, so you only let me sleep."

Of course I did not pinch; but I pulled one of his raven locks with sufficient force.

"Little barbarian!" he exclaimed, "what do you mean by such usage?"

"I mean to waken you, Cornelius."

"And why so?" he asked, to obtain that second's delay which is so delightful to the sleeper.

"Oh, Cornelius! how can you ask? Must you not work to be a great artist, paint fine pictures, and become famous?"

"Very true!" he exclaimed, starting up; "thank you, Daisy, you are a faithful friend." And in rising, he passed his arm around my neck and kissed me. But even as he did so, I saw his glance light suddenly; I turned round, Miriam was standing on the threshold of the open door looking at us. I sighed: my three weeks' happiness was over.

## CHAPTER XIII.

CORNELIUS received Miriam with a flushed brow and eager look that betrayed the joy of his heart. And yet with what indolent calmness she let him clasp her hand in his, and stood in the centre of the room, looking at him with an abstracted smile! In answer to his eager inquiries she composedly answered—

"Yes, my aunt is better and I am quite well. Just arrived? no—I came back this morning."

"And I never knew it!"

"And never guessed it from not receiving the letter! I am come up to scold you. Your sister says you take no rest."

"I had been sleeping when you came in."

"I saw you were being awakened very gently."

"Gently! she used me as Minerva Achilles,

but I do not complain; I wanted to work: look!" He took her arm within his and led her to his easel.

"Have you done all that since I left?" she asked.

"Indeed I have, Miriam."

"That accounts for your letters being so short." He reddened; she calmly resumed—

"Why are those two figures mere outlines?"

"Thereby hangs a tale, or rather a tea-spoon. They are to be Gipsies: the child is stolen."

"And a miserable little creature it looks."

"I see I have not caught the likeness," said Cornelius, looking mortified: "it is Daisy."

"Why, so it is!" exclaimed Miss Russell, seeming astonished; "how could I recognize the child in such unbecoming attire?"

"Unbecoming! Do you know, Miriam, I rather admire Daisy in her rags: her attitudes are so graceful and picturesque; and is not she wonderfully fair?" he added, taking up one of my arms and seeming to call on Miss Russell for confirmation.

"You have made quite a drudge of her," she said, looking at the picture.

"Not a degraded one, I hope," rather quickly replied Cornelius: "Marie Antoinette looked a queen, even when she swept the floor of her prison;

if I have not made Daisy look superior and intellectual in her rags, the fault is mine, Miriam."

He looked at her, she did not reply; he continued—"I am taking great pains with that stolen child; as a contrast to the coarse enjoyment of the two Gipsies, and a type of unworthy degradation borne patiently and with unconscious dignity, I mean it to be the principal figure of the group: you understand?"

"I should not have guessed it," was her discouraging reply. He looked mortified; she smiled, and added, "I know nothing of Art. I have never seen an artist at work. Let me look at you and learn."

Cornelius looked delighted, and giving her a somewhat proud smile, set to work at once. She stood by the easel in an attitude of simple and attentive grace; she had taken off her black beaver bonnet, and the wintry light by which the artist painted, fell with a pale subdued ray on her fair head, and defined her perfect profile on the sombre background of the room. But his picture and his sitter absorbed Cornelius; his glance never wandered once to the spot where his beautiful mistress stood in such dangerous proximity. I saw her look at him with wonder, almost with pity, then with something like displeasure.

Cornelius was more than usually intent. From his face I knew he was obstinately striving against some difficulty. He frowned; he bit his lip; his very manner of holding palette and pencil was annoyed and irritated. At length he threw both down with an impetuous and indignant exclamation—

"I cannot—do what I will—I cannot!" I was accustomed to such little outbreaks, but Miriam drew back, and said in a tone of ice—

"Mr. O'Reilly, you will break your palette."

"I beg your pardon," replied Cornelius, with a start that showed he had forgotten her presence, "but Daisy and the palette are used to it, and there are things would provoke Saint Luke himself, saint and painter though he was. Would you believe it? I cannot render the thoughtful look of that child's eyes otherwise than by a stare!"

He spoke quite mournfully: Miriam laughed; her lover looked astonished.

"What about it?" she said.

"Why, that I am painting a bad picture."

"What matter?"

"And the disappointment! the shame!"

"Be more philosophic," she coolly replied: "success is but a chance."

"Begging your pardon, Miriam, it is a chance

that falls to the good pictures, consequently it is worth any toil, any sacrifice."

"Yes," she replied, with reproach in the very carelessness of her tone, "you are, like all men, absorbed in your ambition."

"Would you have me sit down in idleness?"

"I would have you not set your heart on a picture and on fame."

"I must work, Miriam, and the workman cannot separate himself from his work, nor be careless of his wages."

He spoke very warmly; she coldly smiled.

"I can do so," she replied; "I can tell you: paint good or bad pictures—what matter? you are still the same man."

"Ay, but there is a bit of difference between a good and bad painter," answered Cornelius, looking half vexed, "and Cornelius O'Reilly hopes to paint good pictures before he dies! But for one or two things this would not be amiss. Daisy, come and look at it."

"You appeal to her?"

"She sometimes hits the right nail on the head. Are the eyes better, Daisy?"

"No, Cornelius," I frankly replied.

"No!" he echoed, giving my neck a provoked pinch, "and why so, pray?"

"I don't like them much; they look in."

"You silly child, that is just what I want," he replied, smiling and chucking my chin; "I don't know what I should do without that little girl," he added, turning to Miriam, "she is a wonderful sitter, not a bad critic—"

"Are you not afraid she will take cold?" interrupted Miriam; "that dress looks thin."

"I trust not," answered Cornelius; "the room is kept warm; she says she is quite warm, but she is so anxious to be of use to me that I can scarcely trust her. Oh, Daisy! I hope you have not been deceiving me."

He made me lie down on the couch, drew it by the fire, threw over me a shawl that was kept in the studio for that purpose, and wrapped me in its folds. I smiled at his anxiety; Miriam looked on with surprise, as if she had forgotten that Cornelius was fond of me.

"I am so thankful to you for mentioning it," he said, turning towards her, "I am forgetful of these things; but if anything were to happen to Daisy, even for the sake of the best picture man ever painted, I should never forgive myself. How do you think she looks?"

"Sallow, as usual," she replied, in passing by me to leave us.

"You are not going yet," he said, going up to her, "you know I want to convert you to Art."

"Not today," she replied coldly, and, disengaging her hand from his, she left the studio.

Cornelius came back to the fireplace and looked pensive. I attempted to rise.

"No," he said quickly, "you must not sit any more today."

"Oh! Cornelius," I entreated, "pray let me; I do so want to see the picture finished."

Cornelius sighed; he looked down at me rather wistfully, and said, involuntarily perhaps—

"Yes, *you* like both the workman and his work."

I had felt, after the death of her young sister, that Miriam never would like me; from the very day she came back to the Grove, I felt she disliked me. Her return, without making Cornelius less kind, brought its own torment. She now daily came up to the studio, and from the moment her calm and beautiful face appeared in the half-open door, I felt as if a baleful shadow suddenly filled the room. She did not banish me from the only spot she had left me, but she followed me to it and mercilessly embittered all my happiness. Never once did she leave without having stung me by slights and covert sneers which Cornelius was

too frank and good to perceive; which I dared not resent openly, but over which I silently brooded, until jealousy became a rooted aversion.

She had been back about ten days when I again fell ill. Cornelius thought at first I had taken cold in sitting to him, and was miserable about it; but the doctor on being called in declared I had the small-pox, and though Cornelius averred he had gone through this dangerous disease, Miss O'Reilly was morally convinced of the contrary, and banished him from my room.

Nothing could exceed her own devotedness to me during this short though severe illness, and my slow recovery. She seldom left me, and never for more than a few minutes. One evening however, as I woke from a light sleep, I missed Kate from her usual place, and to my dismay I saw, by the light of a low lamp burning on the table, her brother, who stood at the foot of my bed, looking at me rather sadly.

"Oh! Cornelius, go, pray go," I exclaimed, in great alarm.

"There is no danger for me, child," he replied gently; "how are you?"

"Almost well, Cornelius, but pray go; pray do."

Without answering he hastily drew back and stepped within the shadow of the bed-curtain as

the door opened, and admitted, not Kate, but Miriam. She did not see Cornelius, for the room was almost dark; she probably thought I slept; she at least approached my bed very softly, moving across the carpeted floor as dark and noiseless as a shadow. When she reached the head of my bed she stood still a moment, then taking the lamp lowered it so that its dim light fell on my face. Our eyes met; I looked at her with a wonder she did not seem to heed; I had never seen her calm look so eager. With a smile she laid down the lamp.

"Oh, Miriam, Miriam!" exclaimed the reproachful voice of Cornelius, who came forward as he spoke, "you have broken your word to me."

She started slightly.

"What brought you here?" she asked.

"I wanted to see my poor child."

He took her hand as if to lead her to the door; but she did not move, and said in a peculiar tone—

"Have you seen her?"

"Not well."

"Look at her then."

She handed the lamp to him; he took it reluctantly, just allowed its ray to fall upon me, then laid it down with a sigh.

"Poor little thing!" he observed, sadly.

"But it might have been much worse," said Miriam, gently.

"Much worse!" he echoed.

I could not imagine what they were talking of.

"I am almost well again, Cornelius," I said.

"I am glad of it," he replied, cheerfully; then turning to Miriam, he again entreated her to go.

"With you," was her brief reply.

He complied; as they went out together, I heard him chiding her for her imprudent kindness. She did not answer, but smiled silently as the door closed upon them.

On learning the visit Cornelius had paid me, Kate was very angry. To our mutual relief he did not suffer from it, and even repeated it in a few days, in order to take me down to the parlour, where I had begged hard to take tea with him and Kate. As he lifted me up in the heavy shawl which wrapped me, Cornelius sighed.

"My poor little Daisy," he said, "how light, how very light you are getting!"

"Oh! but," I replied, a little nettled, "I am to improve so much, you know—at least Miss Russell said so—you remember?"

He gave me a rueful look, and, without replying, took me downstairs. Miss Russell sat by the

table looking over a volume of prints; she just raised her eyes to say quietly—

"I am glad you are well again, Daisy," but took no other notice of me.

Cornelius laid me down on the couch, and sitting on the edge, asked me how I felt.

"Very well, Cornelius," I replied, and half rising, I passed my arms around his neck and kissed him. He returned the caress, and at the same time gently tried to make me lie down again. I detected the uneasy look he cast at the mirror over the mantel-piece which we both faced; I wanted to look too; he held me down tenderly, but firmly.

"Not yet, my pet," he said, with some emotion, "you must promise not to look at yourself until I tell you."

The truth flashed on me: I was disfigured; know not how it had never occurred to me before. I burst into tears, and hid my face in the pillow of the sofa. Cornelius vainly tried to comfort me: I would not even look up at him; to be told by him, and before her, of my disgrace, was too bitter, too galling.

"Shall we love you less?" asked Cornelius.

"Besides, what is beauty?" inquired Kate.

Miriam said nothing.

I did not regret beauty, which had never been mine to lose, but I lamented the woful change from plainness to downright ugliness. "I know I am like Mr. Trim," I despairingly exclaimed,— "without eyebrows or eyelashes."

"Indeed," replied Cornelius, "your eyelashes are as long, and, like your eyebrows, as beautifully dark as ever. Let that comfort you."

I thought it poor comfort—there are so many things in a face besides eyebrows and eyelashes; but drawing the shawl over mine, I checked my tears, and asked Cornelius to take me back to my room. He complied silently, and, as he laid me down on my bed, said gently—

"Have I your word that you will not look at yourself?"

"Yes, Cornelius," I replied, scarcely able to speak. "Oh! Kate," I added, as the door closed on him, "am I so very ugly?"

"Never mind, child," she answered, cheerfully, "bear it bravely."

I bore it bravely enough in appearance, but in my heart I repined bitterly. Kate and Cornelius were both deceived, and praised me for my seeming fortitude. I did not leave my room for some time, and had no difficulty in keeping my promise; I never felt tempted to break it; I sickened at the

thought of meeting in a glass my own scarred and disfigured face. My only comfort was, that as Miriam came not near me, I was spared the look I should have found it most hard to bear in my humiliation. But I could not delay this moment for ever. One evening, when I knew Miss Russell to be below, Kate, spite of my entreaties and my tears, insisted on making me go down.

I entered the room like a criminal, and without once looking up or around me. I was going straight to the stool by Kate's chair, when Cornelius, who sat on the sofa with Miriam, said, making room for me—

"Daisy, come here."

I felt my unhappy face burn with mortification and shame, as I obeyed and sat down by him. He kissed and caressed me very kindly, but though Miriam never turned towards me her face so pale and calm, nor inflicted the look I dreaded, the thought of her secret triumph rendered me dull and joyless.

"You don't seem very merry," said Cornelius, stooping to look into my face.

"The silly thing is afraid of the looking-glass," pitilessly observed Kate.

"Have you really not yet looked at yourself?" asked Cornelius, in a tone of surprise.

"No, Cornelius," I replied, in a low voice, "I had promised, you know."

"So you had, and you kept your word like a good little girl. Well, I release you—you may look now."

I felt in no hurry to avail myself of the permission.

"Why don't you look?" he asked very coolly.

"I would rather not," I faltered.

"But you must look at yourself some day; better have it over," was his philosophic advice.

"Indeed I would much rather not."

"Pshaw!" he said, impatiently, "I thought you had more sense."

"So did I," observed Kate.

I thought it was very easy for them, who were both handsome, to talk of sense to a poor plain girl.

"Is it possible," composedly continued Cornelius, "that you mind it? Now, if you find your nose a little damaged, for instance, will it affect you?"

"Indeed, Cornelius, I should not like it," was my dismayed reply.

"Would you not?"

"No, indeed; is there anything the matter with my nose?"

"Just give one good, courageous look, and see."

He took my hand, made me rise, and led me to the glass. In vain I turned away—he compelled

me to look, and I saw my face—the same as ever; not handsomer, certainly, but not in the least disfigured. I turned to Cornelius, flushed and breathless with pleasure: he seemed to be enjoying my surprise.

"Ah! how uselessly we have frightened you!" he said, smiling, "but your face looked bad at first, and that wise doctor said it would remain thus. Kate and I have watched the change with great interest, but seeing how well you bore it, we resolved not to speak until you were once more metamorphosed into your former self. Confess the pleasure was worth the fright."

I glanced at the mirror, then at Cornelius, who stood with me on the hearth-rug, and with an odd, fluttering feeling, I observed—

"I don't think I am disfigured, Cornelius."

"Not a bit," he replied, gaily: "oh! you will grow up into a beauty yet."

He was holding my head in both his hands, and looking down at me very kindly. I earnestly gazed in his face, and said—

"Did I look very bad on that evening when you brought me down, Cornelius? Was I quite a fright?"

"Almost," he replied, frankly. "Well, what is it?" he added, as he saw my eyes filling with tears: "you do not mind that now, do you, child?"

"No, Cornelius, but I remember you kissed me."

He smiled, without answering, and went back to Miriam. I quietly resumed by him the place to which he had summoned me, and which I had so reluctantly taken. He paid me no attention, and pertinaciously looked at his betrothed; yet when my hand silently sought his, its pressure returned told me that he was not unconscious of my presence. I felt too happy to be jealous, and for once sitting thus by Cornelius, unnoticed, but with his hand in mine, I could be satisfied with that humble degree of affection which a plain, homely child may receive in the presence of a beautiful and beloved woman. Kate, pleased to see me recovered and happy, was smiling at me from her low chair, when she suddenly frowned and started, as a low, timid knock was heard at the street-door.

"That's Trim!" she exclaimed astonished, for, like Mr. Smalley, he had not come near us since the engagement of Cornelius and Miriam; "I know him by his slinking knock, which always seems to say, 'Don't mind me—nobody minds me, you know.'"

Miriam smiled scornfully; the parlour door opened, and Mr. Trim's head appeared nodding benevolently at us all. He entered with his usual slouch, shuffled his way to Kate, and holding her

hand in both his, kindly hoped, "she was quite well."

"Quite," was her prompt reply. Mr. Trim was so happy to hear it that he forgot to release her hand, until that of Cornelius, laid on his shoulder, made him turn round. Mr. Trim's eyes seemed to overflow with emotion. "God bless you, my dear fellow, God bless you!" he said, shaking both the hands of his friend up and down several times with great fervour, "it does me good to see you; I wanted Smalley to come, and thought it would do him good too, but he declined. He returns your Byron with thanks and his love, and hopes Byron was a Christian, but he would not come. Ah! my dear fellow, clergymen are men."

"What else did you think they were?" shortly asked Kate,—"birds?"

Mr. Trim's fancy was much tickled at the idea. He shut his little eyes and laughed immoderately. When he recovered, he went up to Miriam, who sat indifferent and calm, like one taking no share in what was passing. Mr. Trim hoped she was quite well; she replied quite, with the most scornful civility. He hoped she had been quite well since he last saw her. She had been quite well. He hoped she would continue to be quite well. She hoped so too, and took up a book. Unde-

terred by this, Mr. Trim drew a chair near the angle of the sofa in which she sat, and spite of her astonished look, there he remained.

Cornelius had resumed his place between Miriam and me, and I had the honour of next attracting Mr. Trim's attention.

"I am quite well now," I replied, in answer to his inquiries, "but I have had the small-pox."

"Had the small-pox, eh? Let me see; I am half blind, you know."

He raised the lamp, surveyed me through his half-shut eyes, then said admiringly—

"A very fair escape. Don't you think the little thing's complexion is improved, Ma'am?"

He addressed Miriam, who acquiesced by a silent bend of her queen-like head.

"Altogether," continued Mr. Trim, "she looks better. Now do you know, Ma'am, that at sixteen Daisy will be quite a pretty girl."

Miriam smiled ironically. Cornelius looked at me and complacently observed—

"Three years may make a great difference."

"Is Daisy thirteen?" suddenly asked Miriam.

"Not yet; her birthday is in May."

"You told Doctor Mixton she was ten."

"Twelve, Miriam; she was ten when I brought her home."

She did not reply.

"How goes on the Happy Time?" asked Mr. Trim, bending forward with his hands on his knees.

"It is finished, and I am engaged on another picture."

Mr. Trim shut his eyes and nodded at Miriam, as much as to say, "I know all about it;" then asked how she liked sitting.

"I do not sit to Mr. O'Reilly," she replied in a tone of ice.

"Now, Ma'am, I call that cruel, to deprive our friend—"

"Mr. O'Reilly has never asked me to sit to him."

"But you know I mean to do so when I have finished my Stolen Child," said Cornelius, whose look vainly sought hers.

"Allow me to suggest a subject," rather eagerly said Mr. Trim: "if it won't do, you need not mind, you know. Did you ever read 'The Corsair,' Ma'am?"

"Yes," impatiently replied Miss Russell.

"Then what do you say to Medora?"

"Medora, my favourite heroine!" exclaimed Cornelius; "that is not a bad idea, Trim."

He looked at his betrothed; she was looking at

Mr. Trim, who, as usual, was in a state of blindness.

"Medora in her bower," he resumed, "or parting from Conrad, or watching for his return—do you object, Ma'am?"

"Not if you will sit for Conrad," she replied, her eyes beaming scorn on his ungainly person.

"But Mr. Trim is not like the print of Conrad," I put in pertly, "and Cornelius is, is he not, Kate?"

Mr. Trim laughed; Kate gave me a severe look and rang for tea. Our guest rose; Miss O'Reilly civilly asked him to stay; but he declined, he had an engagement, he said. Scarcely had the street-door closed upon him, when he knocked again. Deborah opened, and his head soon appeared at the parlour door.

"Dreadful memory!" he said chuckling, "quite forgot Byron; Smalley was rather shocked at some passages, and says you are to read his notes on Manfred."

"Daisy, go and take that book from Mr. Trim," said Kate.

I rose, went up to him, and held out my hand for the volume. He stretched out his arm, caught me, lifted me up, and attempted to kiss me. As I saw his face bending towards mine, I slapped it with all my might, and cried out, "Cornelius!"

"Put that child down," said his somewhat stern voice behind us.

Mr. Trim put me down as if he had been shot. I ran to Cornelius, who looked dark and displeased, and clung to him for protection.

"Like him best—eh, Daisy?" said Mr. Trim, trying to laugh it off, "he is Conrad, eh? but I have no Medora. You foolish thing! why it is only a joke—who minds me?"

"Do not be alarmed, Daisy," observed Cornelius, addressing me, but giving Mr. Trim an expressive look; "Mr. Trim will never do it again."

"Catch me at it!" rather sulkily answered our visitor, rubbing his cheek as he spoke, "I have enough of such valiant damsels. Well, well," he added, relapsing into his usual manner, "no malice; good night, I am glad to see you so happy and comfortable. God bless you all!" He cast a sullen look around the room, and vanished.

Cornelius said nothing; but there was a frown on his brow, and he bit his nether lip like one who chafed inwardly. He led me back to my place on the sofa, and, sitting down by me, did his best to soothe me.

"Why, Daisy," merrily said Kate, "I did not know you had half so much spirit."

I hid my burning face on the shoulder of her brother.

"Never mind, child," she resumed, "he won't begin again."

"I should like to see him," observed Cornelius.

I looked up to say aloud—

"Cornelius won't let him, will you, Cornelius?"

He smoothed my ruffled hair and vowed no Trim ever should kiss me against my will.

"Come, come," put in Kate, "she is only a child."

"Child or not, he shan't kiss her," muttered Cornelius.

"Nonsense!"

"Nonsense! I tell you, Kate, that the child does not like it, nor I either." He spoke sharply.

"You do not look as if you did," said the chilling voice of Miriam.

She had beheld all that had passed with her usual indifference, and now sat leaning back in the angle of the sofa, looking at us with calm attention. Cornelius turned round and replied quietly—

"You are quite right, Miriam, I do not like it."

The entrance of Deborah interrupted the conversation. After tea Cornelius played and sang. Miriam left early.

## CHAPTER XIV.

On the following morning Kate sent me up my breakfast as usual, and accompanied it with a message that I was not to think of rising before twelve. But I felt strong again; besides I was eager to surprise Cornelius; I hastily donned the ragged attire of the Stolen Child and ran up to the studio. I entered abruptly, then stood still.

In the centre of the room stood Miriam, clad in strange attire. A white robe fell to her feet; a blue cashmere scarf was wrapped around her fine person; her fair hair was braided back from her face; her arms, as beautiful as those of an antique statue, were as bare. Cornelius stood looking at her with eager delight, and never noticed my entrance.

"I am not sure," he said, "that the costume is correct, but I know I never saw even you look so beautiful!"

She smiled, and sank down on the low couch, with negligent grace. One arm fell loosely by her side, the other supported her cheek.

"Do not stir," eagerly cried Cornelius: "that is the very attitude! Oh! Miriam, what a glorious picture it will make!" and walking round her, he surveyed her keenly.

"You think of nothing but your pictures," she said, impatiently.

"Why do you tempt me? Just allow me to move your left arm."

With chilling indifference, she passively allowed him to move her beautiful arms at his pleasure.

"There!" he said, drawing back, "it is perfect now."

"Outstretched! theatrical!" she replied ironically.

"Can you mend it?" asked Cornelius, looking piqued.

She did not answer, but by just drawing in a little, and bending more forward, she threw into her face, into her look, attitude, and bearing, a strange intensity of eager watchfulness, that made her fixed gaze seem as if piercing the depths of an invisible horizon. Cornelius looked at her with wonder and admiration.

"That is indeed Medora," he frankly said at

length: "Oh! Miriam, never tell me, after this, you do not care for Art! and now be merciful, let me sketch you thus."

"And the stolen child, who is waiting?" she said, glancing at me.

"What, Daisy!" he exclaimed, seeing me for the first time.

Miriam attempted to rise; he eagerly turned back to her, and entreated her so ardently to remain thus, that she yielded. When he had prevailed, he turned to me.

"Daisy," he said gaily, "you are a good little girl, but you may take off your picturesque attire."

Alas! so I might: the sorceress had conquered me in my last stronghold!

At first Miss Russell would not hear of sitting for anything more finished and elaborate than a sketch in crayons, but from the sketch to a water-colour drawing, and from this again to an oil painting, the progression was rapid: at length the Stolen Child was wholly set aside and replaced on the easel by Medora. I had before lost Cornelius in the evening, in his moments of leisure and liberty, I now lost him at his labour; the intruder stepped in between him and me on the very spot where I thought myself most secure, and I had to look on

and see it, for Miriam objected, it seems, to sitting to Cornelius alone; Kate had something else to do than to keep them company: the task was left to me.

That Miriam should sit to Cornelius instead of me, was the least part of my grief; I had never expected that he would always paint little girls: the sitting in itself was nothing, but it led to much that it was acute misery for a jealous child like me to witness.

I was not accustomed to be much noticed by Cornelius in the studio, but if he had a look to spare from his picture, a word to utter in a pause of his work, he gave both look and word to the child who sat to him, or silently watched him painting, and now this was taken from me! I was to my face robbed and impoverished, that another might be enriched with all I lost. For two years I had reigned in that studio, of which not even Kate shared the empire; for two years Cornelius had there spoken to me of his art, of his future, of everything that was linked with this proud aim and darling ambition of his life; and now another listened to his aspirations; another heard every passing thought and feeling which, though a child, it had once been mine to hear, and I had to look on and see it all.

But it was not all.

I did not merely see Miriam enjoying whatever I had once enjoyed; I saw her loved as I had never been loved, possessed of a thousand things which had never been mine to lose. Miriam was a woman, an intellectual, educated woman; she could do more than listen to Cornelius, she could converse with him; she did do so, and constantly she showed me the immense superiority which her knowledge and her years gave her over a mere child like me. She had also become converted to Art, and if not so fervent a disciple as I had been, she was certainly a far more discriminating critic. Her sense of the beautiful was keen and peculiar. She seldom admired it under its daily external aspects, but she could detect it where it seemed invisible to others, and was by them unsought for. She never agreed with Cornelius about what he considered the merits of his pictures; but then, by showing him other real merits of which he had remained unconscious, she charmed more than she ever provoked him. With his fair mistress to sit to him, to look at and talk to—what could Cornelius want with me? It was natural that involuntary and unconscious carelessness should creep in his kindest words and caresses; that, exclusively absorbed in Miriam, he should often forget my

presence; that his look, perpetually fastened on her, should seldom fall on me; that every word he uttered should be directed to her: it was natural; but to see, feel, know this, not once in a time, but daily, not for an hour in the day, but all day long, was a torment that acted on me as a slow fever.

But it was not all.

Though Cornelius had been, was still, very fond of me, he had never of course been in love with me. He was in love with Miriam, and if he had enough self-control and self-respect not to show more of the feeling than it was becoming for a child like me to see, he loved too ardently not to be for ever betraying himself to jealous and watchful eyes like mine. His look rested on her with a tenderness and a passion, his voice addressed her in lingering accents, of which he was himself unconscious. His very tones changed in uttering her name, just as the meaning of his face became different when he looked at her. If I had known the frail and fleeting nature of human feelings, I might not have trusted these first signs of a first passion; but all I knew of love was what the fairy tales had told me, and in them I had never read but of loves that had no ending, and were not less ardent than enduring. That Cornelius might one day be less absorbed in Miriam, less oblivious of

me, was a thought I neither knew nor cherished. The future, when I could forget the present enough to think of the future, had but one image—Cornelius eternally loving Miriam, eternally forgetting me.

But even this was not all.

Miriam was in all the beauty of womanhood; Cornelius in all the fervour of man's young love. She was with him almost all the day long, not alone, but with the check of a constant presence that irritated the fever liberty and untroubled solitude might have soothed to satiety; and this, or I am much deceived, she knew well. He had to repress himself perpetually, in a way which must have been wearying and painfully irksome. His temper was too generous to wreak itself upon me, but I became conscious of a most galling and yet most inevitable truth: in that studio where I had won my place by so much perseverance; where I had shown to Cornelius a faith so entire and unshaken; where I, a child, and restless as all children are more or less, had been the patient slave of his art; where Cornelius had always welcomed me with a greeting so sincere and so cordial in its very homeliness; yes, there, even there, I was no longer welcome. Daily, hourly, I read in his face, in his eyes, in his voice, that my presence was burden-

some, my absence a release. I knew it, and I had to endure it; I had to be ever drinking this last sickening drop of a cup that was never drained. I was jealous: and the word sums up all my miseries. I was also what is called a precocious child, and perhaps I felt more acutely than many; I say *perhaps*, for jealousy is an instinct,—is not the dog jealous of its master?—assuredly it is not a feeling that waits for years or knowledge. It is the very shadow of love; and who yet watched the birth of love in a human heart?

I loved Cornelius as an ardent and jealous daughter loves her father, and I was miserable because he bestowed on another that which I neither could wish for, nor even imagine the wish to claim. As was my love, so was jealousy, filial and childlike: a jealousy of the heart, in which not the faintest trace of any other feeling blended. It was sinful, but it was pure. I did not suffer because Cornelius was in love with Miriam, but because he loved her. If, at twelve, I could have understood and separated feelings that blend so strangely in the heart, I know that I would not have envied Miriam one spark of the passion, but I know that I would still, as I did bitterly, have grudged her every atom of the tenderness. If I did not feel jealousy in that mysterious intensity which has

stung so many hearts to madness, I felt it in its calmer bitterness and more patient sorrow. The peculiar agony of this tormenting passion seems to me to lie in the blending of two most opposite feelings: love, from which it springs, and hatred, which it engenders; it has thus the warmth of one and the fierceness of the other, and there also lies the evil and the danger. I loved Cornelius, I detested Miriam. My only salvation from what might have been the utter ruin of my soul, heart, mind, and whole nature, was that I loved him infinitely more than I hated her; woe to me had it been otherwise!

But even as it was, I suffered—and justly—from my sin as well as from my sorrow; and most unhappily I brooded over both unsuspected. Cornelius had detected my jealousy, treated it as a jest, and forgotten it; Kate had, I believe, vaguely conjectured its existence, but I was little with her and on my guard; the only one who really knew what I suffered and why I suffered, was the one who had first inflicted and who now daily embittered the wound. Yes, Miriam knew it: I saw it in her look, in her speech, in her manner; and, if anything could render me more unhappy, it was the consciousness that my miserable weakness lay bare for her to triumph over.

Thus, and more than thus, I felt. Our true life lies in our heart; from within it, according as we feel with force or weakness, we rule the outward world in which we are cast. Strange and dramatic incidents make not the eventful life: it borrows its charm or tragic power from the ebb and flow of feelings. There never was a child who led a more sheltered existence in a more sheltered home; whose life was less varied by adventure beyond the routine of daily joys and sorrows; and yet to all that I felt then I may trace the whole of my future destiny. When I look back on the past, I feel that but for that which preceded, the plain incidents that are to follow would seem, even to me, tame and trifling; but the stakes make the game, and when happiness has to be lost or won the heart will leap at each throw of the dice, and beat fast or slowly with the faintest alternations of hope and despair.

I remember well one day at the close of winter. They both felt tired, and sat on the low couch where I had so often sat by him or watched him sleeping; he now exerted himself to amuse her as he had once done for me; I sat at a table by the window; a book lay open before me, but I could not read; I seemed all eyes, all ears, all sense for them.

"You must sit to me some day for a Mary Magdalene," said Cornelius.

"You spoke of a Juliet the other day," she replied, with a careless smile: "what am I not to be?"

"Say, what should I not be if Cornelius O'Reilly had the power?"

"And why should not Cornelius O'Reilly have the power?"

Her tone was scarcely above indifference, and yet hard to witness and to know; Cornelius had never looked half so delighted when I boldly assigned him a rank among the princes and masters of his art, as he now seemed with these few ambiguous words of his mistress. He started up to work like one who has received a fresh stimulus to exertion.

"I am still tired," coldly said Miriam.

"I do not want you yet."

"Why work then?"

"Oh! Miriam, must not my beautiful Medora progress?"

"Your beautiful Medora!" she echoed, with something like scorn passing across her face, and as if she thought that Medora interfered with the rights of Miriam.

Cornelius was standing before the easel; I saw him smile at the image it bore.

"She is beautiful," he said in a low tone, "though I say it that should not, and though I know you will never grant me that she is."

She smiled a little ironically as he turned round to her.

"I will grant you anything," she replied; "Medora is not my portrait, but an ideal woman for whom you have borrowed my form and face."

"What will not an artist attempt to idealize?" asked Cornelius with a touch of embarrassment.

"Oh!" she observed very sweetly, "I do not mean to imply it was not required. Only if this were a portrait, I should object to having Daisy's eyes and brow given to me."

Cornelius became crimson, and felt that the artist had made the lover commit a blunder. He tried to pass it off carelessly.

"Ah!" he said, "you think that because I gave too dark a tint to the eyebrows, and in attempting to make the eyes look deep, rendered them rather grey—"

She smiled and rose.

"You are not going?" he asked with surprise.

"Why not, since you do not want me."

"No, do not; pray do not!" he entreated; he looked quite uneasy, and in his earnestness took both her hands in his. She withdrew them with

an astonished and displeased air, and a look that fell on me.

"Daisy," impatiently said Cornelius, "have you nothing to do below? no lessons to learn?"

He could not have said "You are in the way" more plainly; I did not answer, but rose and left them.

"What brings you down here?" asked Kate, as I entered the parlour, where she sat alone sewing.

"Cornelius said I was to learn my lessons."

"Then take your books upstairs."

I objected to this; but Miss O'Reilly was peremptory.

"I am sure Cornelius wanted to get me out of the way," I said at length, to explain a refusal that naturally surprised her.

"Oh, he did!" indignantly exclaimed Kate.

"Indeed he did, Kate."

"I don't care a pin about that," was her decisive rejoinder, "but I am determined that he shall not lose his days as he loses his evenings: go up directly."

I obeyed with deep reluctance; even when I reached the door of the studio, I paused ere I opened it, then stood still and looked.

They had not heard me; how could they?

Miriam, no longer intent on going, had resumed

her place; Cornelius sat at her feet, one elbow resting on the edge of the couch, his eyes intently fixed on her face. She bent over him; her cheeks were flushed, her lips slightly parted; one of her hands was buried in her own fair hair which fell loosened on her neck, the other slowly unravelled the dark locks of Cornelius.

"It is not at me, but at Medora, you are looking," she said impatiently.

"Are you jealous of her?"

"Jealous! when I begin it shall be with Daisy?"

"Jealous of Daisy! as if you could be!"

And he smiled. I entered; Miriam looked up, saw me, and smiled too; Cornelius turned round and, reddening like a girl—she had not blushed—he rose hastily. I came forward, closed the door, and, as if I had seen, had heard nothing, I sat down and opened my books; but the words of Cornelius, "Jealous of Daisy!" seemed printed on every page; the smile, with which he had uttered and she had heard them, was ever before me. He cared so little for me that I could not be, it seems, an object of jealousy. Miriam staid for about two hours more, then left; scarcely had the door closed on her, when I rose to go: but as I passed by Cornelius, he laid his hand on my shoulder, and arrested me with a reproachful—

"Are you, too, deserting me?"

I stood before him with my books in my hand; I looked up into his face; there were no tears either in my eyes or on my cheek, but he must have seen something there, for, looking surprised—

"Why, child," he asked, "what is the matter?"

He did not even know it!

"Does your head ache?" he continued, with the most irritating unconsciousness.

"No, Cornelius," I replied in a low tone.

"Are you feverish, then?" and he felt my pulse.

This time I did not answer.

"Lie down for awhile," he said kindly. He made me sit down on the couch; placed a pillow under my head; told me to sleep, and returned to his easel.

Alas! it was not the sleep of the body that I wanted, but the calm peace which is to the mind what slumber is to the senses. His kindness irritated more than it soothed me. I watched him painting; I saw that the eyes of Medora were going to change their hue, and I remembered the time when Cornelius would not have given a stroke of the pencil, more or less, to please mortal creature. I tossed about restlessly; he heard me, and thinking me unwell, he came to me.

"Poor little thing!" he said compassionately,

and stooping, he left a kiss on my forehead; but this pledge of old affection had lost its charm; I felt betrayed, and involuntarily turned away. Cornelius smiled with astonishment.

"Why, what have I done?" he asked, gaily.

His unfeigned ignorance humbled me to the heart. Without answering, I started up, and ran away to my room, where I could at least cry in liberty.

If Cornelius guessed by this what was the matter with me, he certainly did not show it. He treated me exactly as usual; he did not appear to notice that I now never returned his morning or evening caress, nor even that, as soon as he was obliged to put by Medora for the more profitable, though less interesting occupation of copying bad drawings, I scarcely went to the studio. This was perhaps good-humoured forbearance, but I took it as a proof of carelessness and indifference, which strengthened me in my jealous resentment, more felt, however, than expressed. This had lasted about a week, when Cornelius, one evening, came down to tea, looking so pale and ill that his sister asked at once what ailed him. He sat by the table, his brow resting on the palm of his hand; he replied that his head ached.

"Do you go out this evening?" inquired Kate, after awhile.

"No," he answered, without moving.

Kate looked surprised, but made no comment. I sat by her as usual, but, being lower down, I could see his face better than she did; it was rigid, and ashy pale; he neither moved nor spoke. I rose, went to the table, and tried to catch his eye; but his glance fell on me, and saw me not. I asked if the lamp annoyed him; he made a sign of denial. I stood before him, and looked at him silently.

"Sit down, child," impatiently said Kate.

I obeyed by pushing my stool near Cornelius, and sitting down at his feet; then seeing that this did not appear to displease him, I softly laid my head on his knee.

"You obstinate little thing," observed Kate, "why do you annoy Cornelius?"

"She does not annoy me," he said, and his hand mechanically sought my head, and rested there, in memory of an old habit, of late, like many another, laid aside and forgotten.

After awhile Kate sent me up to her room for a book; whilst looking for it, I heard the door of Cornelius open and close again; his headache had compelled him to retire several hours earlier than usual. It was worse on the following day, for he did not come down; once I fancied I heard him stirring, and I said so to Kate.

"Not he, child; he will remain in bed all day, so you need not start and listen every second."

But her back was no sooner turned than I slipped upstairs. I had not been mistaken; Cornelius was up, and in his studio, but not at work; he stood before his easel, gazing on Medora, and looking so pale and ill that I felt quite dismayed.

"What do you want?" he asked, coldly but not unkindly.

"Nothing, Cornelius; am I in the way?"

"You may stay."

I sat down by the table; he began to pace the narrow room up and down; once he stopped short to say—

"There is no fire; the room must be cold; you had better go down."

"I am not cold; pray let me stay."

He did not insist; resumed his promenade, then threw himself down on the couch, with an impatient sigh and a moody face. I rose, stepped across the room, and sat down by him. Encouraged by his silence, I passed my arm around his neck. I had meant to say something, to tell him I was grieved for his pain or trouble, whichever it might be, but when it came to the point, all I could do was to kiss his cheek. Cornelius made a motion to put me away impatiently; but when his eyes,

looking into mine, saw them filled with tears, he checked the movement.

"Poor little thing!" he said, with a sad smile; "you put by your childish anger the moment you think me in pain."

"Oh! Cornelius," I exclaimed, with much emotion, "though you should like another ever so much, and me ever so little, I shall never be so naughty again. Ah! if you knew how miserable I felt last night when I saw you looking so ill!"

"And came and laid your head on my knee like a faithful spaniel—yes, child, I know *you* like me."

He said it with some bitterness. I replied warmly—

"Indeed I do, Cornelius, and always shall, even though you should not care for me at all."

"Would you?" he answered, his thoughts evidently elsewhere.

"Why, how could I help it?" I asked, astonished at the question.

He started like one whose secret thought has received some sudden sting.

"Ay," he said, "one cannot help it; to wish to leave off, and wish in vain; there is the torment, there is the misery."

"But I don't wish to leave off," I exclaimed, almost indignantly, and clinging to him, I added, a

little passionately perhaps, "I could not if I would, and if I could I would not, Cornelius."

There was a pause; as I looked at him, something like a question debated and solved seemed to pass across his face. Then he pressed me to his heart with some emotion, as he said, rather feverishly—

"Daisy, you are wiser than those who sit down and write books or preach sermons on self-subjection, as if it were not the very hardest thing in this world. Let them!" he added, a little defiantly, "the very children rebuke them and know better."

If children reflect little and imperfectly, their faculty for observation is marvellous. It suddenly occurred to me that I had been unconsciously pleading for one whom I had little cause to love; the thought was both sweet and bitter. I looked at Medora, then at Cornelius, and said in a low tone—

"Why did she vex you, Cornelius?"

He gave me a distrustful look, and putting me away—

"The room is cold," he observed, "go down, child."

I would rather have stayed and learned more; but his tone, though kind, exacted obedience.

When Cornelius came down to tea, his sister

asked how his head felt; he said first, "Much worse," then immediately added, "Much better." His movements, like his words, were irresolute; he rose, he sat down; he stood by the table; he went to the hearth; suddenly he went to the door.

"And your headache!" observed Kate, seeing he was going out.

"Never mind the headache, Kate!" he replied impetuously: he was gone, slamming the door behind him.

Kate laid down her work with an astonished air.

He came in as I was going up to bed. I stood on the first steps of the staircase and turned round to look at him: his face was flushed; his eyes sparkled; he looked excited—more excited, I thought, than joyous or happy. In passing by me he took me so suddenly in his arms that he nearly made me fall, then begged my pardon, and finally kissed me two or three times so tenderly that Kate, who saw us from the parlour, looked quite jealous, and uttered an emphatic "Nonsense!"

"Can't a man kiss his own child?" asked Cornelius, putting me down with a gay short laugh.

"Cornelius," said Kate, "your headache was a quarrel with Miriam—confess it."

He reddened and looked disconcerted.

"I knew it," she observed triumphantly.

"No, Kate," he replied quietly, "you did not know it; you mistook; I can give you my word that I have never had the slightest difference with Miriam; by the bye, she sends her love to you."

With this he entered the parlour and closed the door. I thought it odd, and yet I knew not how to disbelieve Cornelius. At the end of the same week Miriam again came to sit for Medora. If there was a change in his manner to her, it was that he seemed to be more enamoured than ever.

Cornelius had not attached sufficient importance to our tacit quarrel to alter in the least after our tacit reconciliation. A young man of twenty-two, passionately in love with a beautiful woman of twenty-six, was not likely to care much whether a little girl of twelve sulked and would not kiss him. I liked to think the contrary—that he had been angry with me, and that I should show my penitence. This proved a most unfortunate mistake. Since she had wholly superseded me, Miriam had allowed me to remain in peace; but when I endeavoured to render myself useful or agreeable to Cornelius, she resented it as an insolent attempt to divert even a fragment of his attention from herself. She was sitting to him as usual one afternoon, when he suddenly exclaimed—

"How provoking! I cannot find it; I can scarcely get on without it."

"It will give you time to rest," quietly said Miriam.

A little reluctantly he sat down by her, but said he must return to his work at three.

It was a sketch, which he wanted for the foreground of Medora, that Cornelius could not find. We had vainly looked for it the whole morning. I thought I would have another search. A deep shelf, well stored with art-rubbish, ran round the room. Unperceived by Cornelius, I got up on the table, reached down an old portfolio, opened it, and found at once the missing sketch. Overjoyed at my success, I stepped down too hastily; my foot slipped, I fell; in no time Cornelius had picked me up.

"Are you hurt?" he cried, in great alarm.

I was too much stunned to reply at first; when I could speak, my first words were—

"Here it is, Cornelius!"

I picked up the sketch from where it had fallen, showed it to him, and enjoyed his surprise.

"Oh! you naughty child!" he said, with kind reproof. He sat down again on the couch, made me sit by him, and tenderly pressed his lips on my brow.

"I should suggest brown paper and vinegar for a bruise," observed the chilling voice of Miriam.

"Are you bruised, my darling?" anxiously asked Cornelius.

I laughed, and kissed him. He turned towards Miriam, smiled, and with the generous and imprudent candour of his character, he said—

"I am very fond of that little girl, Miriam."

And lest she should doubt it, again he caressed me. She sat at the other angle of the couch with drooping eyelids; I know not if she looked at us, but as the church clock struck three, she said, sweetly—

"Yes, I consider your affection for that child a touching trait in your character, Cornelius."

She had never in my presence called him by his name; as she uttered it, I saw his hand seeking hers, which she drew not away.

"Cornelius," I said quietly, "it is three o'clock."

"I had forgotten all about it," he cried, starting up, and relinquishing the hand of Miriam, who darted at me a covert irritated glance of her green eyes.

He went back to his easel; I returned to my books.

"Daisy," he said, "you must not study after such a fall."

"Let me finish my lessons," I replied eagerly; "you know you have half promised to examine me this evening."

"Poor little thing!" kindly said Miriam, "I dare-say it is too much study has lately made her look so much more sallow than usual."

I felt my face glow. I was sallow; but was I to be ever reminded of it?

"Or perhaps it is biliousness," she continued: "her face and hair are almost of the same hue; true that is light, nearly straw-coloured. Be careful, Mr. O'Reilly, do not let her work so much."

"Daisy, put by your books," anxiously said Cornelius.

"Not today," I replied imploringly.

"She is so industrious," he said admiringly.

"Like all children who cannot rely on the quickness of their perceptions."

"Oh! Daisy is very quick," he answered rather hastily; "she has answers that often surprise me."

"I should like to be surprised. Do you mind answering a few questions of mine, Daisy?"

I did mind. I mistrusted her; I did not want to acknowledge her as an authority, still less to be exposed by her to Cornelius.

"Thank you," I replied, "Cornelius is to examine me this evening."

"I like to judge for myself," she answered smilingly.

I did not reply.

"Daisy, did you hear?" said Cornelius.

"Yes, Cornelius."

"Then why not answer? Do you object to being examined now."

"Not by you."

"But, my dear, it is Miss Russell who wishes to question you."

I remained mute; he gave me a severe look. No more was said on the subject. With waning daylight Miriam left us. I expected a lecture or a scolding, but Cornelius never opened his lips to me. I had a presentiment that this silence boded me no good, and indeed it did not. After tea, I brought out my books for examination; Cornelius looked at me coldly.

"I am astonished at your confidence," he said. He rose, took his hat, and walked out.

For a week I had looked up to this evening, worked hard for it, and thought with pride of the progress of which I could not but be conscious, and which Cornelius could not but perceive. As the door closed on him, I burst into tears.

"What is all that about?" asked Kate, astonished.

I threw my arms around her neck and told her, weeping all the time. She reproved and yet comforted me.

"It was wrong," she said, "wrong and foolish to be rude to Miss Russell; but do not fret, child, though Cornelius may be vexed, he is fond of you in his heart."

"Not as much as he once was, Kate."

She did not contradict the bitter truth.

"It will never be the same thing again," I continued.

"As if I did not know it!" she exclaimed, involuntarily perhaps.

I looked up into her face. She too had seen and felt that Cornelius was not to us what he once had been. She smiled sorrowfully as our looks met, pressed me to her heart and kissed me. Woman-grown though she was, and child though I might be, there was between us the bond of the same secret pain and sorrow.

## CHAPTER XV.

Thus began the short and bitter contest between Miriam and me. I apologized to her, humbly enough, on the following day; but in domestic life, reconciliations seem only to lead to fresh quarrels; to make it up is nothing; whilst the spirit remains unchanged, strife cannot cease. I continued to be jealous of Miriam; she continued to resent every poor attempt I made, to secure the love and attention of him whose every thought and feeling she wished to engross. I loved him too ardently, and I was too rash and proud, to bear this passively. My persistency cost me dear: I was daily wounded in the most tender and sensitive point—the affection and the regard of Cornelius. I had faults, no doubt, but Cornelius never seemed to have perceived them as he now per-

ceived them: how could he? before, they slumbered in peace, lulled by the love I felt for him and that which he felt for me, whereas now they were—not pointed out to him, she had too much tact for that—but awakened and drawn forth under his gaze, daily, nay hourly. I felt this; I resolved to be good if it were only to provoke my enemy, but I never could keep to the determination. She knew so well how to make me defiant as I had never been, or silent and sullen as Cornelius never had known me; above all, how to rouse me to a pitch of obstinacy which not even he could subdue.

He saw the change with wonder and regret. He felt, rather late, that the jealousy of a child was not a matter to be slighted; he tried to reason me out of it; he was kind, severe, and indulgent by turns —uselessly. The mischief was, I could not help loving him more than ever, and, loving him thus, it was impossible I should not be jealous. Once this excessive affection had pleased him, and he had encouraged it injudiciously; it now wearied him—and no wonder; it had become the source of a daily annoyance, paltry yet most irritating.

I remember well one morning. Oh! how those childish incidents have burned themselves into my brain! She had as usual been provoking me by allusions to my pale and sickly aspect, and then by

questions so insidiously framed to make me break forth into impertinence or ill-temper, that I would answer her no more. This availed me little.

"Pray let her alone, Miriam," said Cornelius, greatly disgusted, "she is a sulky little thing, unworthy of your notice."

"The poor child would not be so if she were not so unhealthy," kindly observed Miriam.

This was one of the speeches with which she used to sting me; she knew, and I knew too, how much Cornelius admired health, with its fresh asspect and its joyous feelings, in both of which I failed so lamentably.

"You are too good to be always framing excuses for her," replied Cornelius, with a severe look at me.

"Excuses!" I thought; "yes, it was easy to frame such excuses." But I never replied; I never looked up from my books. I sat at the table by the window, as if I had heard nothing; for this took place in the studio, where Miriam still daily sat for Medora. Towards noon she rose to go.

"Give a look at our little garden first," said Cornelius; then turning to me, he added—"Put on your bonnet and cape—the sun is warm, and the air will do you good."

It was one of the mildest days of early spring. Our garden boasted but few flowers. Cornelius

gathered the freshest and fairest for his mistress; but some snowdrops which she admired specially, he did not gather.

"These I cannot give you," he said, "they are Daisy's; the others are Kate's, and consequently mine."

She took the flowers he was handing her, with a smile of thanks, and sat down on the wooden bench by the house. He was soon by her side—soon wholly wrapped in her. The sun shone bright and warm in the blue sky; the breeze was very pleasant; the old house had many a brown, rich tint; the ivy on the porch was green and glossy; the garden had begun to wear the first fresh blossoms and light verdure of spring; a bird had perched on the highest bough of the tallest poplar, and thence broke forth into many a snatch of gay song. It was a morn for happy lovers to sit thus side by side, looking out on heaven and earth, but still lingering within the shelter of a warm home.

I looked at them, and I keenly felt the words of Cornelius. Those snowdrops were mine. I had set them myself, and daily watched them growing up and unfolding their shy beauty; but I had never attached to them an idea of selfish enjoyment. To place them some morning in the studio of Cornelius, enjoy his surprise, his pleasure, and

his thanks, was all I had dreamed of; but if it pleased him better to bestow them on her in whom he now most delighted, what mattered it to me? I felt bitterly that she had taken from me his affection, his thoughts, his looks, his kindness, his very caresses, and that she might as well have the flowers with the rest. I gathered them, and silently placed them on her lap. Miriam looked at me and coloured slightly. Cornelius seemed charmed, and passed his arm around my neck with a sudden return of kindness.

"Ah!" said Miriam to him, "those flowers are given to you, and not to me, and it is you must give the thanks."

By the "thanks" she evidently meant a kiss, but Cornelius had perhaps a fancy for caressing me when he chose, for he did not take the hint. Miriam placed the snowdrops amongst the other flowers, and inhaled their mingled fragrance with a dreamy look and smile. Cornelius looked at her, and exclaimed—

"Ah! you are Moore's Namouna now,—the eastern enchantress who lives on the perfume of flowers."

"How can you be so cruel?" she replied, glancing up, and her green eyes sparkling in the sun with perfidious light.

"Cruel?"

"Yes, that poor child is still waiting for her kiss."

Those were her very words. They made my blood boil then, and as I write, I still feel within me something of that old resentment over which years have passed in vain. Who, what was she, that she should speak thus? I had been kissed and caressed by Cornelius, I had lain in his arms and slept on his bosom, before he had ever seen her fair and fatal face,—whilst he was still unconscious of her very existence. He might love her more than he loved me, but he had loved me first: even now, changed as he was, I knew I was still dear to him. She had taken much from me; did she mean to take all? Was he to caress me but at her bidding and pleasure? Were his lips to touch my cheek but when she permitted it? Was she to mete out to me even that paltry drop which she had left in my cup, once so full?

I felt this, not in these words, but far more intensely, for it passed through me during the brief seconds which Cornelius took to smile at her words, and then turn to me to comply with her behest. I abruptly averted my face from his: if he would embrace me but on such conditions, never more might he do so!

Cornelius looked surprised, then indignant. As

I walked away from them, I heard the sweet voice of Miriam saying, sadly—

"How unfortunate I am to make mischief when I meant a kindness!".

"Do not mention it," replied Cornelius, in a tone of sincere distress, "it is inexpressibly bitter to me to trace such feelings in Daisy."

I stood by the sun-dial, with my back turned to them, and still trembling from head to foot with the intensity of those feelings which Cornelius deplored, but which—I felt he might have known that—sprang from the sincerity of my love for him. But it was destined that she should ever be in the right, and I in the wrong. I attempted no useless justification, and heard them going in, without so much as looking round.

Domestic quarrels are an endless progeny: each has a distinct existence; but as it dies it gives birth to a successor, and so on for ever. Even for this day, this was not enough. When Miriam returned in the afternoon, she had scarcely sat an hour to Cornelius before she said to me—

"Daisy, I never thanked you for your beautiful snowdrops; you must forgive me the omission."

"Forgive!" echoed Cornelius, who was now sitting by her for a few minutes, and who probably thought this much too condescending.

"Why not? It is the very least I can do to thank the poor child for her flowers; I also want to give her something: what would please you, my dear?"

She was again addressing me, and she spoke very sweetly: she always did speak so to me. There was the misery and the snare: she knew well enough I could never speak so to her; that, though I dare not say much on account of Cornelius, my very voice changed when I had to address or answer her. I now felt what a mockery it was for her, who had robbed me of everything I cared for, to talk of making me a present, yet I compelled myself to reply—

"Anything you like, thank you."

"Anything means nothing, my dear," she said, very gently.

I did not answer; she resumed—

"Would you like a book? you are fond of reading."

"Yes, I like books, thank you."

"Or a new frock; you do not dislike dress?"

"Oh no, I do not dislike it, thank you."

"But I want to know what you prefer," she insisted.

"I prefer nothing, thank you."

Cornelius knit his brow.

I sat by the table apparently absorbed in my books, and secretly hoping it might pass off thus; but it did not.

"Daisy," said Cornelius.

I looked up; there was no mistaking his gentle, admonishing glance, but as I did not seem to have understood it, he added—

"You have not thanked Miss Russell."

If the dress had been a becoming one, if I could have fancied that there was anything like kindness in the gift, I might have subdued my pride so far as to comply. But to thank Miriam for that which I had refused and which she had forced upon me; to thank her for that which I believed destined to make me look plainer than nature had made me, in the sight of Cornelius, and which, as I knew but too well, accomplished the desired object, was more than I could do.

"You have not thanked Miss Russell," again said Cornelius.

I did not answer; I hung down my head and locked myself up in mute obstinacy. Several times Cornelius said to me, in a voice that boded rising anger—

"Daisy, will you thank Miss Russell?"

I did not say I would not, but then I did not do it; and yet I felt sick and faint at the thought of

his coming wrath and indignation. Well I might! Cornelius had the fiery blood of his race; but his temper was so easy and pleasant, that you could spend weeks with him and never suspect—save perhaps for too sudden a light in his eyes—that he could be roused to violent passion. Provoked beyond endurance by my obstinacy he now turned pale with anger; he left by his work to stride up to me; I quailed before his look and shrank back. Miriam rose, swiftly stepped in between us, and placed me behind her, as if for protection.

"Mr. O'Reilly!" she exclaimed, "command yourself."

She spoke with a look of reproof and authority. Cornelius gazed at her with wonder, then coloured to the very temples.

"Oh! Miriam," he said, drawing back from her with a glance of the keenest reproach, "how could you imagine such a thing?"

He looked as if he could not even name it; then perceiving me as I still stood behind Miriam, he took me by the hand, and, sitting down on the sofa, he held me from him, looking me intently in the face as he slowly said—

"And did you too think I meant, I will not say to hurt, but so much as touch you?"

I looked at him; I thought of all his past kind-

ness,—my heart swelled, the tears which had not flowed at his anger, gushed forth with the question; I threw my arms around his neck.

"Oh no, no!" I cried, "I never did think that, Cornelius, and I never could."

"Never?" he echoed; "are you sure, Daisy?"

"Never," I replied almost passionately, "never, Cornelius; if I angered you ever so much; if I saw your very hand raised against me, I should not fear one moment—for I know it never would come down."

His lips trembled slightly, the only sign of emotion he betrayed. He looked at me; our eyes met, and I felt that there was in his something which answered to all the love and faith of my heart.

"You have been very perverse," he said at length; "you have provoked me, so that I have lost all my self-control; but for the sake of those words, it shall not only be all forgiven to you, but if ever we quarrel again, remember that, whatever you may have done, you need only remind me of this day, for peace to be once more between us."

He pressed me to his heart and kissed me repeatedly, then put me away, rose and went up to Miriam. She stood where he had left her, pale and almost defiant-looking, as if she already repelled the expected reproaches of Cornelius.

"I beg your pardon," he said very gravely.

"My pardon?" she replied, looking up at him with a cold doubt in her eyes.

"Your pardon," he repeated precisely in the same tone. "When I stepped up to Daisy, it was to take her by the hand and lead her out of the room, a little indignity which I thought her obstinacy merited; but how utterly I must have lost my temper, how much I must have forgotten myself, for you to misunderstand me so cruelly!"

She did not appear to perceive the reproach that lingered in this apology.

"You looked provoked enough for anything," she quietly answered, "but it was that unhappy child who made you lose all patience."

"I have enough power over myself to promise you that, no matter what Daisy may do, I shall never again allow it to betray me into passion," said Cornelius very calmly; "I shall try the effect of forbearance; with regard to what passed this morning, I forgive her freely; may I trust that you also forgive her."

"Indeed I do, poor thing!" sighed Miriam, as if she pitied my evil nature too much to resent any of its peculiar workings.

No more was said on the subject; but Cornelius was as much pleased with my trust in him, as he

was secretly hurt with the suspicion of Miriam. If in his manner to her I could see no difference, there was no mistaking the sudden increase of tenderness and affection with which he treated me. Had I only been wise, I might have availed myself of this opportunity to regain almost all I had lost; but who is wise in this world? I was foolish enough to fall into the first snare Miriam placed before me; again I showed myself an obstinate, sullen, jealous child.

Cornelius however kept to his word; he bit his lip, curbed down his anger, and did not allow his voice to rise above the tones of a calm remonstrance.

But better, far better for me that Cornelius should have given way to hasty speech, punished me, and the next hour forgiven me, than that he should have thus checked himself every time I transgressed. The resentment he daily repressed rankled in his mind; I irritated him constantly, and yet I compelled him to incessant self-control: I became a secret thorn in his side, the source of an unacknowledged pain, a warning that met him at every turn: if Miriam had designed it all in order to render my presence insupportable to him, she could scarcely have succeeded better.

How changed was our once happy and peaceful

home! a spirit of strife, of unquiet jealousy, had entered it and poisoned all its joys; a sense of trouble and unhappiness hung over it like the sword over the head of Damocles, and robbed everything of its pleasure and its charm. Kate was grave, Cornelius irritable; I was wretched; she alone who had caused it all remained unalterably serene.

Such a state of things could not last: we all vaguely felt it. The close of April brought the change. Breakfast, which had passed off as usual, was over when Cornelius told me to go up with him to his little studio. I obeyed with pleased alacrity; Medora was again lying by, and Miriam was not therefore to come; he had not shown of late much inclination for my society; I hailed this as a symptom of returning favour. As I found myself once more alone with him in the little room I knew so well, I exclaimed joyfully—

"How kind it is of you, Cornelius, to have asked me to come up!"

"Is it?" he replied, without looking at me.

"Yes, I did so want to come up yesterday; but Kate would not let me. May I come tomorrow?"

"Tomorrow? no."

"After tomorrow then?" I said persistingly.

"Be quiet, child, and let me work."

I obeyed and looked at him, as he continued the task on which he had for the last week been engaged—copying a little Dutch painting for a picture-dealer. After awhile I said—

"When you are a great artist you won't copy pictures, will you, Cornelius?"

"Did I not tell you to let me work?"

"I shall speak no more."

But to make up for not speaking, I got up on the table and attempted to take down some of the portfolios from the shelf. He heard me, turned round, and uttered an imperative

"Come down!"

As I obeyed with regret, I exclaimed—

"Oh! if you only would, Cornelius!"

"Would what?"

"Let me have the portfolios, look at the drawings, and arrange them,—I am sure they are in a great mess. By beginning today I might have them all sorted before the end of the week. May I have one to begin with?"

"No; must I for a third time tell you to let me work?"

I promised to interrupt him no more, and taking a chair, I sat for awhile both quiet and silent: but the spirit of speech must have possessed me, for I forgot my promise and spoke again.

"Cornelius," I said suddenly, "do you think your Happy Time will be accepted?" for Cornelius had sent in his picture to the Academy; but though Kate and I felt some anxiety on the subject, he professed total indifference.

"I neither know nor care," he replied negligently; "I set no value on it, and shall not think the better of it for its being accepted."

"It makes my heart beat to think of it. I am sure it is a beautiful picture."

"How can you tell?"

"Surely, Cornelius," I replied, "I know?"

"I know," he interrupted, "that I never knew you in such a chattering humour. What possesses you, child, on this morning above all others?"

He had sat down to rest, and, leaning back in his chair, he looked round at me; I stood behind him; passing my arm around his neck, I replied, "It is that I am glad to be again up here."

"Have you never been here before?"

"Not much of late,—I mean when you are alone; not this whole week; I thought you were vexed with me, and when you said 'Come up' this morning, just in the old way, I felt so glad that, if Kate had not been looking, I should have jumped up and kissed you."

But Kate was not there now to restrain me—

for the most innocent affection is shy and shuns the eye of a gazer—so I kissed her brother as I loved him—with my whole heart.

"That will never do," exclaimed Cornelius, looking very uncomfortable; "listen to me, child, I have something to say to you."

"I am listening, Cornelius," I replied, without changing my attitude.

"I cannot speak in that sideways fashion."

I walked round and sat down on his knee.

"I shall be quite opposite you so," I said.

Cornelius looked disconcerted, and observed gravely, "My dear, you are getting too old for all this; you must be near thirteen."

"My birthday is in two months' time; yours in five."

"True. Well, as I was observing, there are things natural in the child which might seem foolish in the young girl."

I rose submissively.

"I shall not do it again, Cornelius," I said, as I stood before him; "are there other things I do, and which you think foolish?"

"I did not say so."

"Because if there are," I continued earnestly, "and I should do them in company, for instance, you will only have to say, 'Daisy!' in that way, I shall be sure to understand."

"Nonsense!" he interrupted, reddening.

"Indeed, Cornelius, it is no nonsense: I could understand even a look; I am so accustomed to your face. Have I not been with you nearly three years?"

"That will never do, never!" exclaimed Cornelius, seeming more and more uncomfortable, and stroking his chin with a half puzzled, half sorrowful air; "but there is no help for it," he added more firmly; "come here, child."

He drew me on his knee as he spoke.

"But you said it was foolish!" I said, surprised.

"As a habit; not for once."

I yielded; he passed both his arms around me, looked down into my face and said abruptly—

"You know, Daisy, I am fond of you. I think I have shown it; I hope you believe it."

I said I did; but I could scarcely speak, my heart beat so. Why did he tell me of his affection?

"You have not been happy of late," he continued; "at times I have noticed, with pain, an expression of perfect misery on your face: I do not mean that it was justified, but it was there, and, even whilst I blamed you, it grieved me to think you should be unhappy in our home."

"Do not mind it, I don't," I exclaimed eagerly; "I do not mind being unhappy now and then—I would much rather be miserable here with you and Kate, than ever so happy elsewhere."

"Perhaps you would," he replied, "for if you have great faults, no one can say that want of affection is amongst them. You can love, too much perhaps; but that is not the question; on your own confession you are not happy, and to that there is but one remedy. I see in your face that you have guessed it—separation."

Yes, I had guessed it, but not the less acutely did I feel the blow; I did not answer; he continued—

"We must part. You do not know, perhaps you could not understand, how much it pains me to say so; and yet it must be. You are not happy yourself, and there is in the house a sense of unquietness, of strife, that cannot last any longer. But my chief reason for taking this determination concerns you wholly. You are not aware, my poor child, that the feeling you have been indulging is fast spoiling your originally good and generous nature. You are morally ill. I have done what I could to eradicate the disease, but it passed my power. There is but one cure—absence. And now one last remark: you cannot

change my resolve; spare me the pain of refusing that which I cannot and must not grant."

I did spare him that pain. I lay in his arms mute and inanimate with grief. The blow had been inflicted by the hand I had trusted, and had reached me where I had always sought for refuge and consolation. I had been jealous, perverse; I had provoked and tormented him, but I had never thought he could have the heart to banish me. I believe Cornelius had expected not merely entreaties, but lamentations and tears; seeing me so quiet, he wondered.

"Did you understand?" he asked.

"Yes, Cornelius."

"But what have you understood, child?"

"That you will send me away somewhere."

"Where?"

"I don't care where, Cornelius."

"I shall send you to school," he said.

"To Miss Wood's?" I asked, naming a day-school close by.

"To a boarding-school," he replied gravely.

I felt that too, but all I said was—

"Then I shall only come home every Sunday."

"My dear," he answered with evident embarrassment, "Kate and I should like it greatly; but would it be accomplishing the object in view?"

So it was to be a complete, a total exile! I looked at him; I did not want to move him, to appeal to his compassion, but my glance wanted to ask his if this could be true. That silent questioning look appeared to trouble him involuntarily.

"Shall Kate come and see me?" I asked after awhile.

"Certainly."

"And may I write to you, Cornelius?"

"No doubt you may. What makes you ask?"

"Because of course *you* will not come."

"Why not?" asked Cornelius, looking both surprised and hurt; "am I sending you away in anger? I am not, Daisy. I mean it as a cure,—painful perhaps, but short. I am to marry Miss Russell this summer. We shall live next-door; you will be here with Kate. I trust that by that time good sense will have prevailed over exaggerated feelings; that you will learn to love and respect Miriam as my wife and the companion of my existence. This is the true reason of what you perhaps consider a very harsh measure—that your embittered feelings may have time and opportunity to soothe down in peace."

I understood him. This was but the beginning of a life-long separation. Cornelius married, was lost to me. I felt it, but resistance was useless;

I heard him apathetically. Thinking perhaps to rouse and interest me, he said—

"You do not ask to what school you are going?"

"I do not care, Cornelius."

"It is not, properly speaking, a school. The Misses Clapperton are amiable and accomplished women, who eke out a somewhat narrow income by receiving a limited number of pupils. At present they have only two; they can therefore devote all their attention to them and to you. It has always been my ambition that you should be well educated."

I could not help looking at him. Well educated, and his ambition! Ay, I had had a master once, loved, preferred, honoured beyond any other teacher, who taught me every evening, often on his knee, with looks of kindness and caresses of love. Him I had long lost; but then why tell me of others hired to impart the teaching he had grown weary of giving?

"When am I to go?" I asked after awhile.

"Tomorrow morning; you can stay longer if you wish."

"No, thank you."

"Is there anything you wish for? Tell me freely."

"I should like to see all your drawings again and to arrange them; they want it, I know."

He put me down, rose, brought me the portfolios, and emptied their contents for me. I began my task; I had the spirit of order in details which most women possess; I had often before been of use to Cornelius in such matters, and I found a sorrowful pleasure in being of use to him again, in leaving him this last token of my presence. I could not cease loving him because he chose to banish me; the less I received and the more I gave; it seemed as if what he withdrew, I should make up, that the sum of love between us might never grow less.

Whilst I was busy with my task, Cornelius worked. Every now and then I ventured to disturb him: either it was a drawing I wanted him to look at, or I begged of him to notice the system of my arrangement.

"Because, you know," I once observed, "I shall not be here to tell you."

"Very true," he replied, rather ruefully.

I believe he was not prepared for so entire and resigned a submission. He forgot that it was only in the presence of Miriam he could not master me. My docility seemed to affect him more than might have done my tears, had I shed any. His kind face became quite sorrowful; once he left by his work to come and look over my task, and see-

ing a little drawing in which he had represented himself at his easel with me looking on, and which we had christened "The Artist's Studio," he told me to leave it out, for that he should hang it up.

"Will you indeed?" I said.

I was kneeling on the floor, with the drawings scattered around me; he sat half behind me; I turned round and looked up into his face, smiling with mingled pleasure and sadness. He took my head in both his hands, and looked at me intently; there seemed a charm that kept my eyes on his.

"Ah!" he said at length, "if I dare! but I should only repent it the next five minutes—so it must not be."

With this he rose, and came not again near me. My task occupied me for the whole of that day; it served to divert me. I did not however grieve so very much; there was a sort of incredulousness in my heart which I could not conquer. Kate and Cornelius were much sadder than I was; they knew that it was to be, and I felt as if it were, though decreed, impossible. But when I came down to breakfast on the following morning, when I saw the sorrowful face of Kate, and met the troubled glance of Cornelius, I suddenly awoke to the dread reality. I sat down to table as usual, but I could not eat. Cornelius pressed me, uselessly; even to please him I could touch nothing.

It was a beautiful Spring morning, and I was not to go for another hour.

"Shall I give you a walk in the lanes?" suddenly asked Cornelius, turning to me.

"Thank you," I replied, in a low tone, "I prefer the garden."

He took me by the hand and led me out; I liked that little garden, where I had spent so many happy hours, and from which I was now going to part. I looked at the shrubs, trees, and flowers, at the very grass and earth on which I trod, with lingering love and tenderness; but I said nothing. Cornelius looked down at me, laid his hand on my shoulder, and said abruptly—

"Daisy, will you promise not to be jealous?"

An eager and joyful "Yes" rose to my lips—a most bitter thought checked it.

"I cannot," I exclaimed, desperately, "I cannot, Cornelius."

"You will not promise?" he said.

"I cannot."

He looked at me very fixedly, but uttered not a word of praise or blame.

"Daisy," called the sad voice of Kate from the house, "come and get ready, child."

I was obeying; Cornelius detained me to observe—

"Ask me for something before we part."

"I have nothing to ask for, Cornelius."

But he insisted—I yielded:

"If when the time comes you will write to tell me whether your picture is exhibited or not, I shall like it, Cornelius."

"Have you nothing else to ask for?"

"Nothing else," I replied, looking up at him.

Love is proud: he was banishing me—what could I want with his gifts? He said nothing, and allowed me to go in.

At length came the moment of our separation. I was ready and in the parlour again; the cab was waiting in the lane. Miss O'Reilly, who was to take me, said abruptly—

"Go and bid Cornelius good-bye."

I went up to him trembling from head to foot. He sat by the table reading the newspaper: he laid it down, looked at me, then took me in his arms.

All my fortitude forsook me on finding myself once more clasped in the embrace from which I should so soon be severed. I wept and sobbed passionately on his shoulder. I felt as if I could and would not go—as if it were impossible; a thing to be spoken of, never carried into effect. Cornelius pressed me to his heart, and tried to hush

away my grief, but ineffectually. At length he said, very ruefully—

"Oh, Daisy!"

Looking up, I saw that his eyes were dim. I grew silent at once, ashamed to have moved him so much.

"Well!" said Kate.

"Yes," replied her brother. He gave me a kiss, put me down; Kate hurried me away, and it was over.

We passed through the garden and entered the cab, which rolled down the lane. I remembered how tenderly Cornelius had once cared for me during the whole of a long journey; how he had carried me when I could not walk, and brought me, wrapped up in his cloak and sleeping in his arms, to the home whence he now banished me. And remembering these things, I cried as if my heart would break.

END OF VOL. I.

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